Who's the Patriot?

A Story of the Southern Confederacy

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A STORY

OF THE

SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY.

By Mrs. Flora McDonald Williams.

"Old faces throng around me,
Old forms go trooping past."

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PREFACE.

In the following pages, I have endeavored, with the valuable aid of journals and old letters, to illustrate, for the benefit of those interested, the home or social side of the eventful period which intervened between 1860 and 1865.

Hawthorne says, as if in extenuation of the fact that he went abroad to seek in ideal Italy material for his crowning work of genius, that "no one, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow or mystery, no gloomy wrong or picturesque ruin," to inspire the ambitious pen of poet or novelist.

But since that sentiment was expressed wonderful changes have been wrought, and throughout a large portion of his native land may now be found many a ruin waiting to do its part in furnishing the inspiration.

From amid the wreck, I build, with reverent hands, this humble monument in memory of those who never woke to the knowledge of their "lost cause," and borrow from Father Ryan's beautiful "Sentinel Songs" the lines of my inscription.

"All lost! but by the graves
Where martyred heroes rest,
He wins the most, who honor saves—
Success is not the test."

THE AUTHOR.

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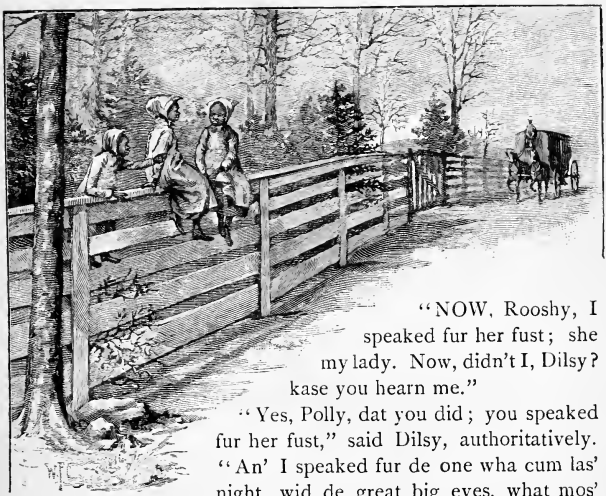
WHO'S THE PATRIOT?

CHAPTER I.



"NOW, Rooshy, I speaked fur her fust; she my lady. Now, didn't I, Dilsy? kase you hearn me."

"Yes, Polly, dat you did; you speaked fur her fust," said Dilsy, authoritatively. "An' I speaked fur de one wha cum las' night, wid de great big eyes, what mos' skeers you to look at."

"Now, I ain't got no purty lady den," whimpered Rooshy, beginning to cry.

Such was the conversation between a group of little darkies who were sunning themselves one bright December morning on the top round of a fence near the front entrance of an old Vir-

ginia country-place, as well as regarding with interest the highway that lay just before them.

"Here cum anudder ca'iage!" presently exclaimed Polly, the first speaker.

"Whah?" said Rooshy, quickly drying her eyes and peering down the road. "Now, *I* speaks fur dat lady, so I does, an' I's gwine to *hab* her."

By this time all eyes were bent in the direction of the slowly-advancing vehicle.

"Well, I nebber!" exclaimed Polly, presently, in tones of surprise, "ef dat ain't Miss M'riar's ca'iage, sho es I sets here."

"Well, sir, ef it ain't I may nebber nuther," chimed in Dilsy; "but Miss' nebber 'spected her, kase I hearn Dinah tell mammy, dey was so many young folkses cumin' dey wouldn't hab no room for Miss M'riar."

"Dat sho'ly *is* her ca'iage, thess es sho es I sets on dis here fence. Does you want ole Miss M'riar fur your purty lady, Rooshy? kase you kin hab her ef you does," and Dilsy and Polly laughed at the latter's speech.

"I don't want ole Miss M'riar for my purty lady; I wants de lady wid de blue eyes an' de straight ha'r, I does," and Rooshy prepared to be bathed in tears again.

"It's Miss M'riar fur sho," again repeated Polly, as the nearer approach of the vehicle now placed the matter beyond all doubt.

"I's gwine right straight an' tell Miss'," said Dilsy, jumping from the fence.

"Now, I spied it *fus'*, an' *I's* gwine to tell Miss'," said Polly, and started after her, but Dilsy kept ahead.

"I's gwine to tell mammy on you, dat I is, Miss Smarty," screamed Polly after the swift-footed courier, as she gave up the race and retired to the "quarters" near by to put her threat into execution.

"Miss', here cum Miss M'riar! She's mos' up to de house.

We seed her ca'iage cumin' way *down* de road; an' she got *mo'* things. She look like she cumin' to *stay*," said Dilsy, almost out of breath and panting between each sentence, as she gained her mistress' presence.

She was an average specimen of the throng of juvenile darkies that, in *ante-bellum* times, usually adorned the outposts to the approaches leading to the master's residence, and who were a self-constituted corps of videttes, whose vigilant oversight the smallest occurrence on the plantation rarely escaped.

Belmont was one of those hospitable old country houses which were once the pride of Virginia, seen now, alas, but seldom, for, with all the reconstructing and regenerating which the old State has undergone since the late fraternal misunderstanding, she has, unfortunately, been shorn of much of her ancient glory. The spacious and beautiful grounds surrounding it scarcely prepared one for the unpretending old pile which stood at the head of the long avenue of cedars through which it was approached, while some distance in the rear could be seen a row of whitewashed cabins, which were occupied by the slaves, and familiarly known as "the quarters."

Colonel and Mrs. Harvey, the master and mistress, were fair specimens of the old Southern nobility.

His early life had been spent in the service of his country, but after the Mexican war, he had left the army and settled down to enjoy the more congenial pursuits which a rural life afforded.

Belmont was the home of his inheritance, and, though antiquated and inartistic in appearance, was endeared to him by all the associations of a happy childhood. It was located a short distance from the aristocratic old town of Winchester, in one of the lower counties of the beautiful valley of Virginia, which is not only regarded as the "garden-spot" of the State, but said by Maury to be equal d only in the world by the fertile and beautiful vale of Cashmere.

A gay company had been assembled beneath its hospitable roof to enjoy the Christmas festivities of the year 1860. Frank Harvey had returned from the University of Virginia, bringing with him several of his college mates, while Belle, his sister, had also invited a number of her friends to pass the holiday season. These, besides several traditional cousins of the family, who, in accordance with a time-honored custom, came to pay their annual visit, had, with the aid of a little ingenious crowding, been comfortably provided for; but it must be acknowledged that Mrs. Harvey received the announcement made by Dilsy with some dismay, and immediately dispatched her for her chief of staff, Dinah, that together they might discuss the emergency.

"Who'd a thought 'at Miss M'riar was gwine to turn out dis time o' de year, anyhow?" said Dinah, as she stood with her arms akimbo, as much perplexed as her mistress by the unexpected arrival of the old lady. Around her head a gay colored 'kerchief was becomingly knotted, giving a picturesque finish to the dark stuff dress which she wore, while an expression of appreciative intelligence lighted up her black face. "All dem strange young gemmens is in de *bes'* room, you know, Mistus," she continued, presently, "an' Miss M'riar ain't gwine to hear to no *free* in a bed. She ought to stay home tell she's axed, I say."

But the old lady was now very near, and some provision must be made at once. An old Virginia house was never so full, either, that you could not find room for one more.

"The only thing to be done, Dinah," said Mrs. Harvey, finally, "is to arrange the nursery as quickly as possible and put beds for the children in my room."

And, with these directions, Mrs. Harvey hurried to the door to meet her husband's aunt.

"What de name o' goodness you reckon dat ole lady want to be here wid all dese young folks, anyhow? She heap better

be home a-prayin'," said Dinah to herself as she went to obey her mistress' instructions.

She had a vague fear that her presence might in some way interfere with the anticipated gayeties of the younger guests, in which she was warmly interested, and for that reason earnestly wished the old lady at home again.

"My dear," said Miss Maria, as soon as she had descended from the high-swung vehicle which had long done her faithful service, "I could not think of allowing you to have all this company on your hands and not come to help you entertain them."

"I am sure I am very glad to have you, aunt, if we can succeed in making you comfortable in so crowded a household," said Mrs. Harvey, though feeling a slight twinge of remorse for the white lie which the occasion seemed to demand.

Until the last parcel had been removed, however, and strict directions given to the driver about the care of the horses, the old lady could not be persuaded to enter the house.

"I believe you are getting ready for some sort of a frolic, are you not, Isabella?" she presently said to Belle when she finally made up her mind to go in.

"Yes, aunt; mother and father have given their consent, and we mean to have just as much fun as we can crowd into the holidays," answered Belle, and her blue eyes danced with mischief as she glanced at Frank, who had also come out to welcome his aunt.

"Won't you promise to dance a minuet with me, Aunt Maria," said Frank, with graceful audacity.

"Why, Francis, my child, I am shocked. Since I have arrived at years of discretion I have put all such vanities behind me."

"Ah! But, aunt, you must have arrived at that period late in life," said Belle, "for I have heard father say that he had seen you when he was a boy dancing with General Washington."

"Why, Isabella, do you take me to be a Mrs. Methuselah?" interrupted her aunt, indignantly. "General Washington, indeed! He was a very old gentleman when I was born. You must be thinking of General Jackson, with whom I *have* danced the minuet; but how much more graceful and dignified was it than the light, frivolous dances of the present day," she added, making an effort to excuse the folly which she had been driven to confess.

Though she had nearly numbered her three-score and ten years, she would permit no allusion to the subject to pass unnoticed, much less an assertion that fixed her birthday ten years or more beyond its real date.

Just then Mary and Tom, the two younger children, bounded into the room all unconscious of their aunt's arrival. They had just been dismissed from the school-room with the promise of a week's holiday, but the effect of her presence soon showed itself, for they immediately subdued their demonstrations of delight.

Notwithstanding appearances, however, Miss Maria *had* been young, and was in reality a kind-hearted old lady; but she had lived alone with only her servants, for many years, and had grown somewhat stern and uncompromising; had the opinion, too, that unless her conversation assumed the tone of a moral lecture. she was negligent of her duty toward the rising generation.

CHAPTER II.

THE morning of Christmas eve dawned in unclouded brilliancy, though the slowly-falling mercury foretold colder and more seasonable weather than that which had preceded it. A few inches of snow were earnestly coveted by the younger people of the household as being indispensably necessary to the proper and entire enjoyment of the season. The young men were busy in superintending and assisting in the erection of a stage for some contemplated dramatic performances, while the young ladies were busily engaged preparing the costumes for the occasion.

"Paddy Miles," an amusing comedy, had been selected for their initial effort, though the principal character, young John Randolph, from Lower Virginia, had not yet arrived.

Frank Harvey and Fannie Morton were to play the part of the lovers, and, as they had been practicing for some time in good earnest, it was but natural to suppose that they would acquit themselves with credit. Charlie Holmes, also a Virginian, was to be metamorphosed into *Doctor Coates*, an elderly physician, to whom *Paddy* was to hire himself, though with great difficulty, on account of having lost his "character," which had been given him by a former employer.

Pauline Rhett, a schoolmate of Belle's from South Carolina, was to appear as the ancient *Mrs. Fidgett*, a long suffering patient of *Doctor Coates;* while Edward Appleton, a college-mate of Frank's from Philadelphia, and Carrie Mason, a cousin of Belle's, were to personate the two servants.

All anticipated a merry time, and, indeed, no effort had been spared by the members of the household to insure the comfort and pleasure of their guests throughout the entire holidays. How different, alas! would have been the emotions of all those

hopeful young hearts could they have overlooked the precipice upon which they stood and viewed beneath them the yawning chasm of the four subsequent years! What a merciful Providence it is that so kindly veils the future from us and allows us to glean so much of pleasure from the passing moments!

Older heads throughout the country already felt great uneasiness for its future welfare. The result of the recent presidential election gave the South little to hope for in a continued union with a section that tried to force upon her a president entirely inimical to her most sacred institutions and guaranteed rights. True, many of the young men already wore the "blue cockade" and dreamed of glory and renown to be won on distant battlefields, but if a panorama of the subsequent four years could have been stretched before them they would have shrunk back appalled and horrified.

Oh, war! grim-visaged and terrible, how ineffectual have been the efforts of the most powerful pen or skillful brush to represent you faithfully in your carnival of death and flame!

Only those who have experienced its besom of destruction and been refined in its crucible of exquisite suffering can realize all the horrible meaning couched in that one short word.

CHAPTER III.

THE stage had been finished, and our young amateurs were dressing for their last rehearsal.

"I declare, Pauline," said Belle, "you look like my grandmother just stepped from her picture-frame in the parlor. Her portrait must have been painted in that costume," and all eyes were turned admiringly on Pauline as she stood before the mirror putting the last touches to her toilet.

She wore a heavy, gold-colored brocade, the waist of which did not extend more than an inch or two below the arm-pits, while the scant, close-fitting skirt added a picturesque grace to her lithe, well-proportioned figure. A pair of high-heeled slippers adorned her feet, and an immense Elizabethan ruff with matronly-looking lace cap completed her becoming costume.

"I am going to leave you all now," she said, placing the last pin, "and show myself to Mrs. Harvey," and with that she passed from the room into the hall. She kept carefully in the shadow as she went along till she thought she saw Dinah approaching, and, the spirit of mischief getting the upper hand of her prudence, she hastily decided to try and frighten her. Quick as thought she concealed herself behind a large linen-press which was near, and, as her intended victim advanced, stepped forth, and said in sepulchral tone: "What is the meaning of all this frivolity?"

She had scarcely uttered the last word, when scream after scream reverberated through the hall. Instantly every door was thrown open and queer scenes ensued. The stately *Doctor Coates* (Charlie Holmes) rushed to the spot first, and the additional light revealing to the horrified Pauline the ancient "Aunt Maria" of the household, she took refuge in flight, leaving the old lady to tell the tale to those around her.

"I've seen Sister Margaret's ghost," she exclaimed, in great excitement. "She wore the gown and cap I have seen her in so often, and every tone of voice was so like. That she should come *this* night of all others," she continued, after being carried to her room and placed upon the bed. "There is trouble in store for us. I know it, I know it," she reiterated.

Mrs. Harvey, who by this time had reached the old lady's side, looked from one to another of the motley group as if asking an explanation of what had been said, but all were alike mystified.

Sending every one from the room but Dinah, she did all in her power to quiet the old lady's fears.

"I 'specs Miss M'riar don' took de linen-press fur de ghos'," suggested Dinah, in an undertone of impatience, "fur I's been gwine 'long dese passages a good many yeahs, an' *I* ain't nebber seed no ghos' yet, an' eb'rybody knows as how ghos'es is mo' aptin to walk whar cullud fokes sees 'em dan whar de white ones does."

Dinah made these skeptical remarks in a very low tone, but Miss Maria, if she did not hear, must have suspected their purport.

"I *know* it was Margaret's spirit," she continued, "and it wore the old gold-colored brocade I've seen her in so often, and the ruff and cap all seemed so natural."

A half-formed suspicion of Mrs. Harvey's as to the origin of the old lady's fright was now confirmed by these words of Miss Maria's. She had heard Belle say that Pauline would wear this identical costume.

"Dear aunt," she exclaimed, "I think I can explain it to you satisfactorily now. Don't you know they are getting ready for some theatricals to-night, and the girls have rummaged through all my old chests for costumes, and one of them I know had selected that brocade of your sister's. I am sure that is the solution of your ghost story," she added.

Miss Maria sighed audibly, as if loth to resign her belief in the apparition which her excited imagination had clothed with ghostly mystery.

"I tole you all de time 'twasn't no ghos', Miss'. Me or Susan, ary one, wus *boun'* to see de ghos' ef dese passages wus haunted. Now, ef it had a been in de *ole* part ob de house, I might a thought Miss M'riar wus right, kase Dilsy cum runnin' out to de cabin one night wid her eyes mos' bustin' outen her head, and *sw'ar* she seen ole marster lookin' froo de window at her."

"You can't always rely upon what Dilsy says, you must remember, Dinah," said Mrs. Harvey, mildly.

"Lawd, Misstis, I knows dat's well as you, but she p'intedly wus skeered dat night; she seed sumpin' oncommon. But she do talk a heap. I don't know which is de longes', her legs or her tongue."

Just then a timid knock was heard, and Dinah, answering, found it to be Pauline; so Mrs. Harvey conceived it best to bring her in as she was, in order to completely dispel the old lady's delusion. She, with ready grace, endeavored to excuse her thoughtless freak, and Miss Maria, when at last comprehending it all, remarked:

"The style of dress becomes you wonderfully, child. It is a pity that no such gowns are made nowadays."

After many interruptions, the rehearsal was finally accomplished and our young friends had returned once more to the parlor, where they found the usual Christmas bowl of egg-nog. Pauline, in merry tones, was explaining to Charlie Holmes how she had become frightened herself and gotten out of the way before he came to Aunt's Maria's assistance, when Edward Appleton, joining them, asked if he might be allowed to hear what amused them.

"Oh, yes," said Pauline, but, changing her mind as she caught sight of a badge which he wore, she continued, saucily:

"WHY DO YOU NOT ADOPT THE MORE BECOMING BLUE ONE?"

"We are laughing at that ugly tri-colored rosette which you have pinned to your coat. Why do you not adopt the more becoming blue one, such as the other gentlemen wear?"

"Ah, Miss Rhett," answered Appleton, with grave courtesy, "because your little State has gotten into a pet and jumped out of the Union, as she flatters herself, you must not expect loyal citizens to countenance her by wearing her badge. I know she will repent and come back again soon, and then you will be sorry that you laughed at my tri-color."

"Indeed!" she replied, with an indignant toss of the head, "you will not see Carolina coming back shortly. I only wonder that old Virginia should hesitate so long to follow her example," and she glanced at Charlie Holmes.

"Let me tell you, Miss Rhett, with all due respect," answered Appleton, earnestly, "that your people are in too great a hurry. If they had only started a revolution in the Union, instead of first withdrawing from it, I do assure you that they would have had all the Democrats of the North with them, and, together, I know, we could very soon settle the Republicans. As it is, however, the Northern States will never submit to this thing of secession breaking up this grand old Union."

"But, Mr. Appleton," interposed Charlie, whose wrath had been growing as Appleton continued, "suppose the Southern States won't submit to this thing of union, how then?"

"Indeed, Holmes," returned Appleton, good-humoredly, "I am convinced that they will submit when the alternative is realized. A Republican administration will, of course, go to the utmost limit of its power, and, indeed, beyond, if necessary, to coerce the seceding States, which are in such a minority; but I feel confident that Virginia, at least, will conclude to remain in the Union and fight, if fight she must."

"I am waiting very impatiently for her decision," answered Holmes. "That convention of ours is taking a long time to find out what is best to be done. If it don't decide now very soon I

think I shall go to Carolina and offer my services," he added, turning to Pauline.

"Pray tell us, Mr. Appleton," said Pauline, "what *you* will do in the event of a war? You seem to know so well what every one else should do."

"I, Miss Rhett?" he answered, with hesitation, "well, I believe I would go on a pilgrimage to the mountains of the moon," he continued, laughingly.

"You wouldn't come down and help us fight the Republicans then, Appleton," said Charlie, with feeling. "You know we will want all the recruits we can get, as we will be in such a minority."

"Well, Holmes, I guess I can't really say as yet what I might do. I hope I may never be called upon to decide that question. I certainly wouldn't like to come against old Virginia with a gun in my hand," answered Appleton.

"What was that you were saying about a gun, Appleton?" said Frank Harvey, who came up at that critical moment with Fannie Morton on his arm.

"Only that if Virginia dares to secede, he will come down here and shoot you and me and burn the old University, and the Lord knows what else," answered Charlie, forgetting in his excitement both time and place.

"Excuse me, Mr. Holmes," said Appleton, calmly, "but I think Miss Rhett can testify to a different version of my words."

"Indeed, I must beg to be excused," said Pauline, quickly; "I could never testify to anything in my life, except," she added, presently, turning to Fannie, "to my ardent desire just now to hear Miss Morton sing."

She saw that the conversation between the two gentlemen was being carried too far, and, with inimitable tact, aimed to direct it in another channel.

But the words which passed between them, though few, were not forgotten by either.

Pauline's proposition for Miss Morton to sing was warmly seconded, but Fannie protested that Mr. Harvey and herself had been appointed a committee to request Miss Rhett to play, which she did to perfection, and finally consented after Fannie agreed to sing.

A conspicuous beauty in any assemblage, Pauline Rhett lost none of her prestige even here, where she had one or two formidable rivals. A rather tall, perfectly-proportioned figure was finished by a head that a Venus might have envied, whose only ornament was its wealth of sunny, brown hair, coiled in rich profusion at the back of it, defying in its very profuseness any more conventional method of arrangement.

To nature's lavish gifts had been added a highly-cultivated mind and winning grace of manner.

Charlie Holmes led her to the piano and stationed himself on her right, to turn the leaves of her music, as well as to catch any stray words she might find the opportunity to drop him; for, to tell the truth, he had quite lost his heart with this radiant South Carolinian.

Appleton, meanwhile, remained where she had left him, and upon rising from her seat when she finished playing, Pauline glanced timidly around and met his eyes fixed upon her with a look of the deepest interest. The color which sprang to her face was noted by Charlie as well as Appleton.

After the "good-nights" were said, Belle went with her mother to help "fill the stockings," which were hung on every available point in the dining-room, by both the white and colored children of the household, and, after leaving a generous share for each, they retired to their rooms.

The four young ladies occupied a large chamber together, and who that has ever been one of a party of girls in a Virginia country house can ever forget the delightful freedom of that magic hour when, after the excitement and pleasures of the day, they meet in unrestrained intercourse, with the inevitable accom-

paniment of apples, pickles, or something else equally indigestible; the different confidences then exchanged and amusing experiences related?

Belle found Mr. Appleton under discussion as she entered with a plate of sweetmeats and fruit, in time to catch Carrie Mason's last words:

"Indeed, I'm quite struck with him, though it's mortifying to admit that I've seen very little of him."

"I am sorry I can't agree with you," said Pauline. "I think he is decidedly 'stuck up.' You ought to hear the way he talks about the South and what she ought to do. What induced your brother to bring that Yankee home with him, anyhow, Belle?" she continued.

"He is no Yankee, Pauline," returned Belle, laughing; "he is a Philadelphian."

"I would like to know the difference?" she replied.

"You have evidently never met one of the regular New England variety, or you would see the difference very quickly," answered Belle. "Edward Appleton has been at the University of Virginia for several years, and most of that time a room-mate of Frank's, and he is very fond of him."

"If you had heard the way he talked to-night you would not think he was very friendly to the South," answered Pauline; "and then he wears that hideous tri-colored rosette, although I told him that *I* thought it was ugly."

"Indeed, dear Pauline, you must not be so prejudiced," said Belle, "and I, as hostess, command you to keep the peace. Pray, Carrie Mason," she continued, presently, "what are you doing with a needle and thread at this hour of the night? Will you look at the girl—she is actually sewing?"

Whereupon Carrie immediately thrust the hand containing the work behind her, but that proved of no avail, for she was caught and made to hold out each hand for inspection, and lo! a "blue cockade" half completed.

"Pray, who is it for?" they each exclaimed, and, after swearing them to secrecy, Carrie confessed that she meant to place it under Mr. Appleton's plate next morning.

"And see if he will not replace with this one the obnoxious tri-color which he now wears, and which, it is quite evident, neither aunt nor uncle like."

"I think he ought to have the good taste to leave it off while he is here, at any rate," exclaimed Pauline, indignantly.

"Do, pray," said Fannie Morton, who had hitherto taken very little part in the conversation, "allow a man to have his own opinion of things, even if he don't express them in what we think a becoming manner." She felt called upon to become champion for Frank's friend.

Early the following morning the children were stealing into every room, and the salutation of "Christmas gift!" was rung in all its changes as they hastened to the dining-room below; and with what eager delight did they bring from the depths of their stockings the treasures therein contained!

What child, if uninfluenced, would exchange the hidden mysteries of a long and well-filled stocking in the gray dawn of a Christmas morning for all the revealed glories of a Christmas-tree the night before?

What a delightful delusion to suppose that Santa Claus has brought all these treasures from a far-off fairyland in the mysterious midnight hours! And what an endless variety of delightful dreams and fancies he indulges in, as he hurries to bed soon after sundown the evening before! Unlike us grown-up children, the realization is frequently with them far beyond even their expectation.

CHAPTER IV.

TO the delight of all, the morning light revealed a fall of snow, which had not entirely ceased, and promised fine sleighing by evening. Carrie Mason had gone to the breakfast room at an early hour to place the "blue cockade" under Appleton's plate, and explain to Stephen, the tall black waiter, that it must not be disturbed.

"I wish you'd make me one o' dem, Miss Carrie," said Stephen, looking at the cockade with admiring eye; "dey is scan'lous purty."

"I should think you would prefer one like Mr. Appleton wears, Stephen?" answered Carrie, laughingly.

*"Lawdy, no, miss, I doesn't want nuffin' *red;* I 'spises *red.*"

When a little later they all met at the table it was with considerable effort that the girls looked unconscious and indifferent, for each one was anxious to see the effect of the discovery of the cockade by Appleton. An amused expression spread itself over his face as he raised his plate, and he turned his handsome eyes toward Pauline.

"So you intend to make a rebel of me at all hazard, I see, Miss Rhett?" he said, smiling.

"Indeed, you do me great injustice, Mr. Appleton," she quickly returned, "I would not raise a finger to displace the beautiful fabric of freedom and liberty which exists *at least* in your imagination, much less impose a badge of hostility to all that is grand and glorious. Honestly, Mr. Appleton, do you really believe all that nonsense?" she added, with mock seriousness.

"Indeed, Miss Rhett," he answered, gracefully, "I can scarcely say what my convictions are now; can only tell you

*The negroes firmly believed that *red* flags had been used by the men of the slaving vessels to attract the native African to the shores, whence they were captured.

what I believed when I came, before I had been exposed to the fascinations of Secessia's fair daughters," he added, in lower tones.

"Now, young ladies," said Colonel Harvey, who had been much amused at the conspiracy against Mr. Appleton, "I think after that graceful concession on the part of our friend, he might be allowed to eat his breakfast without further disturbance. You all must not suppose that because there is a large party in the North, desiring to impose on us of the South, that we have no friends there. Let me relate to you an incident, heard within the past few days, which illustrates the estimation in which Virginia, at least, is held, and that, too, by an official of the Government:

* "My friend, Colonel M., was sent to England last spring, by the State of Virginia, to look up some missing testimony with regard to the long-disputed boundary line between Maryland and our own State. In order to present to the Legislature, on his return, a complete and exhaustive statement of facts relating to it, it was necessary that he should make copies of a large number of original grants and other manuscripts, which, together with maps and publications relating to it, filled a sailor's chest weighing five hundred pounds.

"He landed in New York the very day before Mr. Lincoln's election, and being anxious, as he expressed it, to cast one more vote for a Presidential candidate of the United States, he was impatient at any delay. Going at once to the Custom-house official, he asked to have his baggage inspected as soon as possible. A high ecclesiastical dignitary, who was passenger by the same steamer, and also a native of New York, was at the time standing near, while his own trunks were being overhauled. Colonel M., handing the officer his keys, made known his anxiety to get off as soon as possible, and went with him to point out the different pieces of baggage.

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* Colonel Angus W. McDonald, of Winchester, Virginia.

"On reaching the large chest, upon which his name was printed, and under it—'Commissioner from Virginia,' the officer turned and said:

"'You are from Virginia, I see.'

"Colonel M. assented.

"'Very well, sir,' he continued; 'I do not consider it necessary to examine your baggage. In my long experience at this port, I have never known a Virginia gentleman to attempt to smuggle anything through here.'

"Whereupon Colonel M., who could never repeat the story without a tremulous voice and tearful eye at the tribute to his much-loved State, said to him:

"'I have several articles of jewelry, sir, and some pieces of silk, upon which I expected to pay duty, though they are only intended as presents for my family.'

"The officer replied that he would accept his assurance that the articles named were to be used in that way, and upon such no duty was imposed."

They all listened attentively to Colonel Harvey's narrative, seeming much impressed, and Appleton added:

"And Virginia is held in just such estimation by a very large majority of the people at the North—as well as South Carolina," he continued, turning to Pauline.

Miss Maria's excitement of the previous evening had left her nerves in a very weak condition, and she had been unable to appear at the breakfast table, though Ruth, her maid, had been sent with instructions to bring that all-important meal to her chamber.

"As usual, Ruth," said the old lady, after being propped up to enjoy her favorite meal, "you have not brought sugar enough for my tea. I beg you will go down and ask Dinah to give you several large lumps. You know I can't drink it at all unless it's sweet."

"Dinah," said Ruth, when she found her soon after, "I

come arter more sugar—ole Miss' say you tryin' to starve her on sugar, he! he! he!"

"I specs you eat up half what I gin you on yo' way upsta'rs, you nigger," said Dinah.

"I 'clar' 'fore de Lawd I hasn't. Dinah Johnson, *you* don't know all de white sugar dat ole 'oman resumes. 'Pon my soul! she have resolved enough sugar in *her* tea to buy a whole plantation o' niggers, she *have*."

"Plantation o' niggers, indeed—dat am a putty way fur you to be talkin' about yo' color," said Susan, a housemaid, just then coming up. "You jis ought to hear de way de white fokes in dar is talkin' about the Norf an' de Souf; 'pears to me like *sumpin* is gwine to happen."

"De thing what ought to happen now, Rufe, is fur you to go long to yo' Miss' wid dat ar sugar. Don't stan' listenin' to Susan," said Dinah, and Ruth went off, though with reluctant steps.

"I tell you, Dinah, it does 'pear to me like sumpin *is* gwine to happen sho nuff. Dey don't seem to like dat fellow from de Norf what's w'aring de red an' de white an' de blue rosette; an' he *so* purty, too. What you reckon it's all about, Dinah?" continued Susan, with interest.

"I jis knows dis much, Susan, dat 'taint no bus'ness o' mine, and ef dat was all *you* knowed you'd git along better'n you do."

The welcome snow continued to fall until late in the morning, and at dinner the gentlemen announced the roads sufficiently "broken" to admit of sleighing.

Frank Harvey and Charlie Holmes had spent the morning, with the assistance of one or two of the negro men, in reconstructing an old sleigh that had been thrown aside, as the new one was not capacious enough to furnish seats for more than two of the party.

Frank had placed the new sleigh at Appleton's disposal, he being the greatest stranger of the party, with the understand-

ing that he would invite whoever he preferred to accompany him, while the rest of them were to occupy the large sleigh. It had been quite conceded among the girls that Carrie Mason would accompany Appleton, and they could scarcely conceal their surprise when he asked Pauline to share the sleigh with him; nor did her reply indicate any very great eagerness to accept.

"I will go, on one condition," she said, laughing.

"You have but to name it, Miss Rhett," he answered, gallantly.

"Very well," she replied, saucily; "you must replace the ugly little rosette which you now wear with the one you found under your plate at breakfast."

Appleton looked quite grave for a moment, as if he regretted his ready concession; then, looking up quickly, said:

"Let us set the nation an illustrious example and compromise matters; I will wear *neither*, and both shall go together into my pocket or yours, whichever you prefer."

"Indeed," she returned, "it will be dangerous for me to get it in my possession; so put them both into the innermost recesses of your inside pocket, and I will go."

No one had noticed the quick color that came and went in Carrie's face as this arrangement was made, for this young Philadelphian, with his graceful courtesy and firm adherence to what he conceived was right, had quite won her gentle heart. The fact of his being the sole representative of an unpopular cause had first excited her sympathies, and then her pity; and you, my reader, if you be young or even middle-aged, know well the next of kin to pity. She made herself ready, however, to go with the others, concealing her disappointment as best she could.

As they sped along over the snow-clad earth, Pauline's rich, musical laugh, as it rang out above the "jingle of the bells," was ever and anon borne back to them; and, though Charlie felt chagrined that he had been deprived the pleasure of her

society, he comforted himself with the reflection that she was sacrificing herself on the altar of politeness, which conclusion, however, did not altogether agree with the frequent bursts of merriment from the sleigh in front.

One thing only had occurred to mar the anticipated enjoyment of the evening; John Randolph, who was to take the principal part in their comedy, had not yet arrived.

The sleighing party had returned and dispersed to their various apartments, had indeed begun their toilets for the evening, when the ubiquitous Dilsy, rushing in, in her usual breathless haste, announced:

"Sum'body else comin', Miss'! I hyeah de bells comin', mos' up to de house!"

"Why, John, old fellow," said Frank, a few minutes afterward, as he met his friend on the stairway, "we had almost ceased to expect you, and I do assure you that you would have brought down many anathemas on your devoted head, had you disappointed us."

"I do, indeed, Frank, owe many apologies for my tardiness," answered his friend, "but we have been engrossed with many graver things since you all left college. We have gotten the company organized at last, and been drilling night and day. I tell you I have had a time of it, and might have broken my engagement altogether had I not known that my place could not be easily supplied on such short notice. I tell you, Frank," he added, "there are stirring times ahead of us"

"Well, we must not croak to-night, at least; we have made up our minds to have a royal time, and fling dull care to the winds," answered Frank, lightly.

"What say you, Appleton?" he continued, after they had entered the room, and Randolph and the latter had exchanged salutations, "to joining a light infantry or cavalry company? Randolph says, the military fever is running pretty high among the fellows at college."

"I beg you to excuse my answering that question, Frank," answered Appleton, gravely. "I say let us banish disagreeable possibilities for more agreeable realities."

Randolph had often represented the character assigned him, and felt no hesitation in undertaking it, though he had not been present at any of the rehearsals. Not long after eight o'clock the invited guests from the neighboring town of Winchester and vicinity began to assemble, and soon the spacious parlors were filled with eager faces anxious for the curtain to rise. The stage had been erected at the end of the back parlor, furnishing a good view from both rooms. The play, which consists of a series of comical mistakes, is well performed, and soon after the guests are invited to a sumptuous supper, prepared in the dining-room. When they return again to the parlors, the rows of seats have been removed and a smoothly-waxed floor has been uncovered for the benefit of the dancers, while the stage is now occupied by a band of swarthy musicians, who are tuning their instruments for the evening's work, and seem to anticipate as much pleasure from their own performances as do the dancers themselves. One of them, indeed, seems a part of his instrument, as he writhes and turns with every vibration of his strings.

The floor now is soon filled, and we recognize Carrie and Appleton, side by side, at the head of the cotillion, while Charlie stands with Pauline at no great distance.

As the evening wore on, however, wearied with dancing, Pauline has retired to the roomy recess of a window in the large hall, and Charlie is again by her side, only too well satisfied to have her thus to himself. Before very long Appleton entered with Carrie on his arm, and his head was bent as if to catch the lightest word of his fair companion.

"Your Yankee beau seems to be forsaking his allegiance this evening, Miss Pauline," said Charlie, maliciously.

"You should select your words with more care, Mr. Holmes," she retorted, quickly; "one can not forsake that to which they

have not been devoted." A slight *bridling* in her manner showed some displeasure, whether caused by Appleton's devotion to another or by Charlie's commenting on it, it was impossible to tell.

"I really feared," continued Charlie, "that he might completely proselyte you, and probably induce you to pin back that ugly tri-color."

"I am sorry to see my Virginia friends so intolerant toward a stranger," presently said Pauline. "It seems inconsistent with their national reputation."

But Charlie continued, mercilessly:

"Then it is only your extreme hospitality that induces you to bestow your sweetest smiles in that direction? What a relief that confession is!" he added, mockingly, for he had not yet forgiven Pauline for depriving him of her society during the sleigh ride.

"How could *you* suspect me of any other motive?" replied Pauline, archly.

"Then I *may* 'lay that flattering unction to my soul?'" asked Charlie, earnestly.

"Here they are at last," said Belle Harvey, who just then came up with Randolph. "We have been looking for you everywhere."

"They are forming now for the Virginia reel, Miss Rhett," said Randolph, "and I think I am to have the honor of dancing that with you."

"I believe that was the arrangement," said Pauline, referring to her card, and rising as she did so.

Appleton glanced quickly around as Randolph passed with Pauline, and very soon after he took his place opposite her in the dance, with Fannie Morton as his partner.

"Charlie," said Belle, laughingly, "why are you monopolizing Pauline in this manner? Two or three gentlemen have been looking for her. You must not be selfish because you have the

claim of a prior acquaintance. By the way," she added, "do you think she has changed since you saw her in Richmond last winter?"

"Not materially, only grown more beautiful," said Charlie, "and proportionately more dangerous. I very much fear, too, that she is inclined to flirt."

"Now, I think you do her an injustice there, Charlie. Whenever a girl makes herself as agreeable as she knows how, she always lays herself open to that charge by your sex. I think it is a hard case," said Belle, in an injured tone; "and, besides, the universal vanity of mankind is responsible for it when it is developed in a woman. The proneness of your sex to believe anything complimentary to themselves furnishes a great temptation for one to indulge in the extravagantly agreeable," she continued, laughing.

"And an equal disinclination to accept as facts unpleasant assertions must be my excuse for taking issue with you in your last remark, my friend," said Charlie.

A few days more of varied enjoyments brought the Christmas holidays to a close, and our friends are congregated in the drawing-room for the last time. A sadness pervades the entire group; something prophetic seems to brood over them. Momentous events were crowding so rapidly upon the heels of each other that thoughtful minds, even among the young people, regarded the future with grave apprehension. Edward Appleton, though he had spent so short a time in the society of Pauline, felt that he could not go back to his studies contentedly unless he had some understanding with her. He felt little encouragement, however, for he well knew how unpopular at that time was any one among her own people who did not agree with the politics of that locality.

As for Pauline, she had not taken time to analyze her feelings toward Appleton, though she was conscious that they had undergone a revolution. She had quite made up her mind at first to

dislike him *in toto* on principle; but he had insinuated himself into her good graces almost before she knew it, and how could she repel such gracefully-proffered homage? On the contrary, the thought of its ceasing gave her a sharp pang. If she could but induce him to wear the "blue cockade," then, she thought, she might receive his attentions without any qualms of conscience.

Toward the close of the evening he found himself at her side, behind the piano, somewhat apart from the others. Pauline had been playing for some time, and finally arose to leave her seat; but Appleton, feeling that this might be his last opportunity, laid his hand gently on hers as if to detain her, and she resumed it again, though with seeming reluctance. An embarrassing pause ensued, which was at last broken by Appleton in suppressed tones, as if unwilling that she should know the depths to which he was stirred.

"Are you at all concerned, Miss Pauline, that in a few hours more I shall be far away from you, with no definite prospect of seeing you again very soon?"

"Of course I am sorry you all are going back to college so soon. I wish Christmas holidays came once a month," she answered, lightly.

"Will you not give me some assurance that I will not be forgotten, and, indeed, Pauline," he continued, boldly, "that the love which has been growing in my heart for you every day since we met is accepted?"

She had carelessly turned over the leaves of a piece of music before her while he was speaking, and now turned and said, half-playfully:

"Mr. Appleton, do let your parting request be something with which I can more readily comply."

"Do you think," he answered, quickly, "that you have a right to trifle with me in this way? Have you not shown in many ways that my attentions are agreeable, and now, when I

would ask something in return for the heart which I so willingly lay at your feet, am I to be made a butt and a laughing stock for you? I tell you, Pauline Rhett, you have no right to treat me so."

When Appleton first commenced the sentence Pauline looked proudly indifferent, but as he proceeded she turned from him, as if to hide the effect of his words. When he ceased speaking, she murmured in broken accents, with downcast eyes:

"Think what a short time we have known each other."

To which he replied, with eagerness:

"But the language of the heart has a wider range than the voice, and ordinary degrees of time can not be applied to its action. I feel, indeed, as if I had known you all my life, for," he continued, passionately, "are you not the embodiment of the ideal which I have long worshiped? Say, Pauline, will you not grant me some token that you are not insensible to my suit?"

"I can not answer you to-night," said Pauline, rising abruptly, as if to end the interview. Appleton, quickly divining her object, also arose and offered his arm, and they joined a group that were admiring some engravings on the opposite side of the room.

Although not what is called a "designing flirt," the ingredient of coquetry was largely employed in Pauline's creation. Even now, that her feelings were deeply involved, her pride, false though it may have been, would not allow her to commit herself. She found Appleton so agreeable that the tender interest which others had in vain sought to excite was almost unconsciously awakened by him, though, now that he asked for a formal admission of the fact, she was unwilling to make it. She was haunted, too, by the fearful certainty that her love would not meet with the sanction of those at her own home, for, with all her influence, she could not change his opinions on the one great point of difference.

The University party was to leave Belmont early on the following morning, some time before the regular breakfast hour.

Pauline said "good-night and good-bye," as if not expecting to meet them again, from which fact Charlie Holmes, who had been a close observer of the interview behind the piano, argued that Appleton had urged an unsuccessful suit.

He had regarded him as an intruder from the first, and, now that Pauline seemed to accept his attentions so readily, the prejudice which had existed at college became tenfold greater.

On the following morning they gathered in the breakfast-room for the last time. Belle, as hostess, considered it her duty to overlook the inconvenient hour, and Fannie well knew that Frank would return to his studies with a heavy heart did she fail to be present. The even tenor of their love was fast giving the lie to the old adage: "The course of true love," etc.

Appleton strove manfully to conceal his disappointment at Pauline's absence, and could not control a certain wistful look whenever the door opened, for he hoped to the last that she would come. Sure enough, at almost the last moment she walked in, her crimson-tinted morning dress throwing a peculiarly-becoming light over her face, though there was evident constraint in her manner as she offered apology for her tardy appearance. It was now soon announced that the stage-coach had arrived, and in the bustle of leave-taking and starting the party became scattered, and Appleton found himself alone in the room with Pauline. Hastily taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded, he went quickly to her side.

"Have you no single word of encouragement for me?" he asked, earnestly.

She looked into his face with brimming eyes and extended her hand. He threw his arm around her unresisting form, and pressed her to him in a hurried embrace, then loosening his hold, passed out of the room quickly, but that silent caress spoke volumes for both.

CHAPTER V.

IT is in the spring of '61. A man, somewhat past the prime of life, yet strong and muscular in appearance, is following his plow in a field, near the turnpike leading into the town of Winchester. He is presently approached by a stalwart young smith, whose long leather apron and hammer in hand proclaim his occupation. He is much excited as he leaves the group collected in front of his shop and approaches his father, who brings his team to a halt as he nears the fence which separates him from his son.

"What now, Jacob?" he says, impatiently.

"Father, I tell you I mean to quit the shop and join the company that they are getting up in town. It's no use to talk to me any longer. I've listened to you all along because you were my father, but my self-respect will let me do so no longer; I am going." And he emphasized his last words with a heavy stroke of the hammer on the fence.

"More's the pity that you are such a fool, Jacob," answered his father. "What have you got to fight for, I'd like to know? Do you own a single nigger, or will you ever own anything as long as you mind other people's business instead of your own?"

"But I consider this my business, father; here is my home and here are my friends."

"What have you heard, anyhow, to start you off in this way?" asked his father.

"Well, the news has just come that Sumter has surrendered, and Mr. Lincoln calls for seventy-five thousand troops. They will no doubt be raised, but they won't *all* answer to Mr. Lincoln's call. We are hourly expecting the news, too, of Virginia's secession," he added, excitedly.

"Well, well," said the old man, with a groan, "you think she's got the right to turn against the old Union, and that gives you the right to go against your father."

"No, father, that is not it; but the more I turn it over in my mind, the more I think the State has got the first right. The State is older than the Union; she gave the Union her power at first, and they make a bargain. The Federal Government breaks the bargain—*that* frees the State from her part also, and naturally throws it back to its first condition. I can't see how anybody can look at it any other way."

"Yes, you young fire-eater, you are like the balance of 'em—you want to break up this glorious Union. Talk about your friends," he continued, in a derisive tone, "where are they? These people don't think as much of you as of the nigger that drives their horses and belongs to 'em. Just stand back, I say, and wait awhile, and you'll see if Abraham Lincoln don't do the right thing. *He'll* pull down some of these high and mighty aristocrats. *He'll* give us *all* a fair chance. What chance, I say, has the poor white man got here now, when the nigger works for nothing. I always repented the day I landed here, anyhow, and if you go join this army of secessionists I'll repent it more than ever."

"But you see, father," returned Jacob, "that the Abolitionists have been working this thing up for a long time; they have got their man in at last, and although the South has the right, under the Constitution, to hold her slaves, she knows she can not enjoy that right much longer; so, while she can, she wishes to leave the Union because her rights will be no longer respected in it. You know, too, that the Northern States did not think slavery wrong till they found their climate too cold to work 'em profitably, and then instead of freeing 'em they brought every man down South and sold 'em for big prices. If they are working this thing on principle, it seems to me they should have freed those that were in their power; and *now*, why don't they propose

to buy 'em all, and then they would have the right to free them; but, as it is, the South has the right to her property in whatever shape it may be, and fight for your rights is my motto."

The little cottage near the smith's shop was quiet and sad that night. Only Jonathan Wilder and his elderly wife sat in the clean little eating-room, after their lonely tea. The ticking of the clock on the mantel was the only sound to be heard, save the click of the sharp steel needles, while she knitted away more earnestly than usual, as if she would weave into the rapidly-growing stocking some of the sorrow which oppressed her.

Their only son, Jacob, had gone, in the face of their opposition, to the armory, where there was a gathering of the citizens to organize new military companies, and recruit those already formed. They were near enough to hear the beating of drums, cheers, and firing of cannon, from which they argued that the news of Virginia's secession must have reached there. These old people had emigrated from a barren part of Pennsylvania many years before, in the hope of improving their fortunes, but had not outlived their affection for their native State, and could not understand why their son entertained sentiments so different from those which they had ever sought to instill.

Although the vague hope of one day owning some of those "niggers," of whom he spoke so contemptuously, had been a strong incentive to Jonathan Wilder's emigration, yet, as years passed, and he had failed to enrich himself in that species of property, not so much from a want of effort on his part as a lack of capital to invest, he had somewhat modified his views.

Jacob, with more than ordinary intelligence, had fashioned his ideas of justice and right quite independently of his father's prejudices, and had unconsciously absorbed the sentiments and opinions of those with whom he came in daily contact, and whose warm, sympathetic natures he found more congenial than those of his parents. The matter of State's rights, secession, and so forth had occupied his busy brain for some time past, and he

sought to enlighten himself on those points whenever he could spare the time from his daily round of work.

The news of Virginia's final step had created the wildest joy and delight, as her people were well-nigh worn out at the inaction of her convention. Had it not been for Mr. Lincoln's call for troops to invade the Southern States, which fell like a thunderbolt among that extremely-deliberate and well-ordered body of gentlemen, the ordinance of secession would, most likely, never have been passed at all by that organization. But now, men, young and old, rushed to take up arms.

Our representatives in the United States Congress resigned their high and honorable places, gave up comfortable salaries, and bade adieu forever to those with whom they had associated for so many years in the halls of legislation. Men in high rank, both in the army and navy, resigned their offices and hurried to offer their services to the mother that had nurtured them.

Could all this have been done without firm conviction that sacred rights had been assailed? And most indignantly would they have spurned the imputation that the sordid fear of losing their slaves had driven them to arms. Her guaranteed rights were threatened, and the South rose as a man to defend them, and in a manner which she interpreted to be a lawful and a just one.

As we glance back through the vista of lengthening years, and behold the changes that have been wrought in some mysterious way, we can only feel, however, that what has happened was for her best good, as thereby she has been relieved of her entailed burden of slavery, though not in a manner which seemed to her either just or legal. She has been terribly punished, if unconsciously she sinned. Not often have a people been called upon to endure what has fallen to her lot.

But now we trust that a new era is dawning, and she will rise from her ashes only to become more prosperous and lovely.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR friends at the University of Virginia had long since caught the prevailing enthusiasm, and drills and drums shared their allegiance with the lecture room. Mathematical problems and Greek roots became sadly entangled now with the "manual," which was a new "ticket" to most of them. Numbers of the Southern students had returned to their homes, though the faculty made desperate effort to maintain the college intact until the close of the session. Two military companies had been organized among them, over one of which Charlie Holmes had been elected captain.

Edward Appleton still remained, being anxious to win his A. M., the goal which had lured him through the three past years. His political views had not been at all modified, though he wisely refrained from any open expression of them, knowing how unpopular it would make him, besides entertaining a warm affection for many of those with whom he differed. He had written several times to Pauline, though only receiving one short note in reply, in which she told him vaguely that she could not write, and was very unhappy.

This knowledge distracted him greatly, and he at once decided that he would go to see her before returning home at the close of the session. By that time, however, the country was in such a condition that it was impossible for him to get to South Carolina. So, with a heavy heart, he turned his face homeward, notwithstanding he carried with him the long-coveted degree which at one time he had felt would solace him for the absence of everything else. The gulf was rapidly widening between Pauline and himself, and the prospect of seeing her again, dismal in the extreme. With these reflections, he was scarcely prepared for the many changes which he found had taken place when he reached home.

CHAPTER VII.

AT the close of her long visit to Belle Harvey, some time in April, Pauline Rhett returned once more to her home in South Carolina, Belle accompanying her as far as Culpeper. They had taken their seats at an unusual hour in the old stage-coach which plied between the town of Winchester and the terminus of the M. G. R. R.; but both were too sleepy after their early rising to be very talkative, and had traveled some distance before it was light enough to enjoy even the beauties of the early morning.

The well-graded turnpike over which their route lay wound its way before them, white and glistening, through fresh green fields and wooded uplands, though the spring was scarcely far enough advanced for much foliage.

Here and there, however, the woods were dotted with the white dogwood and redbud in full bloom, the sturdy advance guards of our Virginia forests, though only in the most sheltered nooks were to be seen the ambitious buttercup and spring beauties, stretching forth their dew-besprinkled heads for the first glimpse of the early sunlight.

Now is heard the joyous matin song of a gaudy-coated redbird, as he swings himself, in conscious security, in the topmost branch of a tree overhanging the roadside, while further on, a flock of robins are reveling in the seclusion of a widespreading cedar-tree, which furnishes also their tempting meal of purple berries.

All along, at short intervals, are picturesque country houses, some antiquated and old-fashioned, while others bear the stamp of a more modern style of architecture, all alike, however, in the universal air of comfort and prosperity which seemed to surround them.

Herds of sleek, well-fatted cattle roamed the fields around, and the sounds of cheerful rural life were to be heard on all sides.

Away off in the distance, to their right, tower the majestic peaks of the Alleghanies, until their misty tops seem lost in the hazy atmosphere of the early morning. Intersecting their road a short distance before them is the Shenandoah river, whose clear waters mirror faithfully the picturesque Blue Ridge that rises abruptly from the opposite shore, and justifies in her sparkling beauty the appropriateness of her Indian name (Daughter of the Stars).

Soon the ferry was reached, and, driving the stage into a mammoth boat, they were transported in safety to the other side.

Now commenced the winding ascent of the mountain before them, but nature, providing for the emergency, has so ingeniously broken the Ridge at this point that the difficulty is much less than it seemed on approaching. The same smoothly-macadamized road furnishes them an easy mode of transit, and before long they are descending the other side.

So engrossed were both girls that the sudden halt of the stage quite startled them, and, upon looking out, they observe a sunburnt female emerge from a small house near the roadside, evidently for the purpose of taking a seat also in the stage. The new passenger is clad in fresh mourning, and is presently followed by another female equally as tanned, and also wearing a new black calico. The arms of the foremost one were piled high with bundles of every size, while her friend brought up the rear with a much-worn carpet-bag, from which the contents protruded in a pathetic manner, while under her arm she carried a noble specimen of the Dominique tribe, whose warlike spurs and huge crest seemed to fully excuse the trouble that was being incurred in his behalf.

"Driver," said the would-be passenger in a shrill voice, "kin

I carry all my lugs *inside?* fur, ef I can't, I'll go a horseback to the station (which was only some twenty-five miles). I ain't a-goin' to trust no more o' my things out o' my sight. I dun lost enough now, to say nothin' o' the loss o' friends."

With this, she, with much difficulty, brought forth from her pocket a square yard of new cotton, bordered with black calico, which she applied to her eyes vigorously.

"Well," returned the driver, good naturedly, "you may pack away as much as there is room for, I reckon." Then spying the bird for the first time, he added, in tones of surprise: "You ain't 'spectin' to carry that there dominnekker, is you?"

"I should say I did," returned the bereaved passenger, looking at the "dominnekker" with admiring eyes. "He's real quiet, though, Joe is; he won't trouble nobody," she added, preparing to get in.

"Very well," said the driver, "ef the other passengers don't mind, I reckon I won't make no objection; but you must hurry up an' git in; I've waited too long now."

After much punching and shoving, she finally succeeded in bestowing her effects satisfactorily, and turned to take leave of her friends, who had gathered in the doorway.

"Who'd a thought, Jermimy, that you'd a bin goin' home by yerself this time two weeks ago?"

With this mournful reminder, they all began to sniffle and apply the corners of their aprons to their eyes.

"Ah, Susan Jane, that is one of the unscrutable things that we can't allow for," said a portly female, who looked and spoke as if she might be the parson's wife.

By this time "Jermimy" was quite overpowered, and it took several sharp calls from the driver to remind her that he was waiting; so she soon climbed up into her seat, and Joe was lifted tenderly to her lap, though wearing all the while an expression of martyr-like resignation upon his manly countenance. She now seemed to observe the girls for the first time, and, after a search-

ing look at Belle, leaned forward from the window quickly and screamed:

"Susan Jane! Susan Jane! Oh, driver, wait just *one* more minute, please!" Then turning to Belle, as Susan Jane came running and the stage stopped, she exclaimed: "Do lean out out the window just one minute, Miss, quick!"

Both Belle and Pauline began to be alarmed, thinking she must be crazy, until her next remark proved her sanity. "Now, ain't it lucky I spied your ear-bobs in time? They is jest the kind I want," and turning to her friend, who stood outside, directed her attention to Belle's earrings, who good-naturedly leaned from the window to undergo the inspection. "Now look at 'em good and tell mother to git 'em jest like 'em," she called out, the stage again moving off. "Will you mind telling me the price, Miss?" she said to Belle.

"About forty dollars, I suppose," said Belle, with a mischievous glance at Pauline.

"Law, sakes, that ain't so, is it? Ef I had knowed that I wouldn't a sent mother that word. I know she hain't got that to spare. Why, the fune'al cost pretty nigh that," and she began to search for her square of cotton again.

"Have you lost friends recently?" inquired Pauline, in sympathetic tones.

"Friends, indeed," she replied; "wasn't it my own dear father what we buried, and didn't I ride over fifteen miles a critter-back, and not a critter have I been on, nother, for nigh over ten year."

With this communication her tears flowed afresh, whether excited by the recollection of her fifteen-mile ride or a sense of her bereavement, it was hard to tell.

Shortly afterward they reached the point where our friends were to separate, and with many regrets Pauline bade adieu to Belle, for besides the pain of parting with her friend, she felt that she was severing the single link between herself and Edward

Appleton, as the only communication she had had with him was through Belle's letters, to and from her brother at the University.

She could not make up her mind to enter into correspondence or an engagement, without her father's knowledge and consent. To obtain that now she knew would be impossible, yet she could not help hoping for a favorable turn of affairs. It was at this time that she wrote the note which has been mentioned.

Along her entire route she observed preparations for active hostilities. The initial victory had been won in the surrender of Fort Sumter, and inflated with this easy achievement, popular interest waxed greater in the embryo republic.

Old Virginia next wheeled into the ranks of the seceded States lending an air of stability and conservatism to the movement which it had previously lacked.

Colonel Rhett (Pauline's father) had equipped a company for the pending war, and her two brothers were in the fort at Sumter, so she wisely deemed it best to say nothing upon the subject of her truant affections, when she finally reached home. The anxious eye of her mother would at any other time have noticed her subdued and quiet air, so different from her former cheerfulness, but her boys now engrossed all her thoughts; she had sent them forth to risk the chances of battle in conscious rectitude, and though Pauline shared her anxiety for them, yet her heart was torn by violently-conflicting emotions.

She had seen enough of Appleton to know that his convictions of duty would lead him to enter the army sooner or later, not for the purpose of fighting against the South, but to preserve the Union which he loved with a romantic devotion.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was not long after the organization of the seceded States into a Confederacy, before the tocsin of war sounded in earnest. The lines had been drawn and military ports established all along the south side of Washington. Soon Northern Virginia became one vast camp-ground.

The confronting armies were almost near enough to hear each other's drums, and both sides were eager and impatient to measure courage on the battlefield.

Near the town of Culpeper a recruiting station had been established, and every train of cars brought fresh troops to be drilled for the stern duty before them. At all hours of the day could be heard the roll of the drum, or the voice of an officer drilling raw recruits in the uses of the musket.

Almost all business was suspended, while the ladies organized themselves into sewing societies, to make garments for the volunteers, and each vied with the other in energy and industry. The daily drill and evening parade had an interest for all classes, and regularly every afternoon the citizens of both sexes repaired to the parade ground.

Among the soldiers stationed near Culpeper was the company of cavalry over which Charlie Holmes was now captain, Frank Harvey being a private in the same company.

"What do you suppose has become of Appleton?" said Charlie to Belle, as he joined her one evening on her way home after the parade.

"Indeed, I am quite as anxious to hear as you are," she rejoined. "He remained at college until the close of the session, I know, and after that, I suppose, must have gone home."

"I have no doubt that he has joined the Yankee army by this

time," returned Charlie;" I believe he was a fellow who would fight for what he conceived to be the right, and we could never convince him of our constitutional right to secede, although I believe he likes the South and Southern people."

"I am quite sure that he likes one 'Southern people,'" said Belle, laughing.

"Pray tell me—for I suspect you know—was the liking mutual?" and he waited anxiously for her answer.

"I do not feel altogether at liberty to say what I know on that score, Charlie; that is something which a gentleman can generally find out for himself," she laughingly answered; "of course he must run some risk of having his vanity a little upset, you know."

"Thank you for the suggestion, Miss Belle," he answered, a little stiffly. "If it were not that we have such stern work before us just now, I should certainly avail myself of it."

Belle, now realizing that his feelings were more deeply involved than she had supposed, regretted that she had made him such a bantering reply, and tried to console him by saying:

"Of course, if Mr. Appleton joins the Yankee army he must necessarily resign all thought of Pauline, and whatever may be the state of her feelings toward him, that act on his part would, I should think, forever settle the affair."

It was the morning of the memorable 21st of July, 1861. The summer season had reached its meridian splendor, and the rays of the early sunshine smiled benignly over all the green face of nature, though unsightly trenches and earth-works piled high marred her fair exterior and made the brightness seem a mockery. The two armies in gray and blue faced each other in hostile waiting.

The skirmishes of the previous day prepared them to expect more serious work, and very early on the morning of the 21st those living in the neighborhood of Manassas were roused from their slumbers by loud cannonading in quick succession. All

knew that the fearful ordeal, which had been grimly confronting them for months, was beginning to culminate, and weak woman was now powerless. Each loud report of the death-dealing cannon *might* bring mourning to *her* heart, *must* bring it to many.

The town of Culpeper was near enough for the reports to be indistinctly heard, and Belle Harvey, with her cousin, Mrs. Grey, and the other members of the family, had gathered in the yard and were gazing anxiously in the direction whence the sounds came. Their utter helplessness seems to suggest the only source from which they could reasonably hope for aid, and the little group drop on their knees on the sward "O, God, save our loved ones!" was the only prayer their lips could frame, but even that brought some relief to the waiting ones.

The busy fingers which had so earnestly plied the needle in the grey cloth during the past weeks were now idly clasped, waiting the suspense as best they might, all through the weary hours of that day. As it drags slowly through to its close and the awful sounds which reach them begin to grow fainter, they think at first that the battle is over, but as they strain their ears in breathless anxiety they find that it has not ceased, the sounds are only farther away. Suddenly it flashes across their minds that the enemy is retreating, and their army pursuing. They now decide to go to the telegraph office, where they find more than half the population already assembled, but no answer is returned to the many messages sent.

Late in the evening, when the suspense seems no longer endurable, the shrill whistle of a locomotive breaks upon the stillness, as it heralds the approach of the first train from Manassas, during that long day, and the excitement, already at fever-heat, is fearful until the train arrives. It is filled with the wounded of both armies, bringing the news of a wonderful victory. Shouts of the wildest joy and exultation now rend the heavens, which ever and anon burst forth afresh as they hear recounted valorous deeds, and realize that the enemy is indeed driven back.

Every available house is immediately turned into a hospital for those who had arrived, as well as those they knew would be brought later. Nurses volunteered on all sides, and they who had been harrowed with undefined fears gladly applied themselves to the work of relief and preparation—active, bustling work, that wonderful safety-valve for suspense and grief.

On the following day, when the fuller accounts came in, of how our noble men fought and won the victory, and how the panic-stricken foe, armed and equipped to the teeth, retreated to their very headquarters, numbers there were who could not help indulging the delusive hope that the war was over. But with the news of victory, the sunny side of the picture, was closely blended the black shadow of death and suffering, by those brave ones, whose self-sacrifice had won the glory.

All who had friends engaged waited in anxious solicitude. Before long, Mrs. Grey and Belle received a message from one of the hospitals, that a wounded friend desired them to come to him. Going with all haste to the building, from which the message had been received, it yet proved no easy task to find a familiar face among the number collected there. Every little bed had an occupant, some wearing the blue, though the majority were Confederates, and each receiving every attention that his case demanded.

Finally, after long searching, they recognized the welcome face of Charlie Holmes, but so pale from the loss of blood that he was with difficulty identified. He had received a painful, though not dangerous, wound, and the sad greeting he gave them immediately excited their fears for Frank and Major Grey, from whom they had had no tidings since the battle. Charlie, anticipating their questions, told them that he feared Frank was seriously wounded, though Major Grey was unhurt and had joined in the pursuit.

After making him as comfortable as possible and promising to have him removed to her home as soon as practicable, Mrs.

Grey and Belle, who was overcome with grief, continued their search for Frank and after a long and fruitless effort they finally returned home. Here a note awaited Mrs. Grey from her husband, telling that poor Frank had been instantly killed, when the day was nearly won · the same shell that killed him had also struck Charlie.

A few days afterward his body was carried home by friends and interred with military honors.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Edward Appleton reached home after leaving Virginia, he found popular sentiment unanimous that but a few months would be necessary to demonstrate to the seceding States the impossibility of their withdrawing from the Union and establishing an independent government. Acting upon this rash assumption, the thousands that had volunteered had only tendered their services for sixty and ninety days regarding their prospective military career more as a grand pageant than the prolonged and arduous task they afterward found it.

So many "patriots" had already rushed to "crush out the rebellion," that Appleton concluded to wait, at least until the first term of enlistment had expired, knowing that if the national honor was to be vindicated in that time, enough had already enlisted for that purpose. But he had many misgivings as to its ending so soon. He knew well the stuff that would go to make up the armies of the South. Many left college long before the end of the session, some who had labored hard for their degrees for several years, left—just as they would have realized the fruition of their hopes and labors. He knew how earnest they were in their convictions, and knowing these things, felt not that contempt for them that the Federal soldiery, generally, indulged in, up to the first battle of Manassas.

This fact may, in a great degree, serve to explain the utter rout of that magnificently-appointed and well-organized army that left its stronghold in Washington, to make a triumphal march to Richmond and order the Young Confederacy to disband. Little did they expect to be so soon intercepted, and by a well-drilled, indomitable army. Surprise was commensurate with gratitude in those who were fortunate enough to get back with their lives.

After the first and second defeat of the National colors, Ap-

pleton applied for a commission, and was assigned to duty under General McClellan, who had been appointed to the command of the "Grand Army" of the Potomac, after gaining an insignificant victory in the western part of the State, which, however, was the first that had been won by the Federals. He felt that now, indeed, "the die was cast." Accordingly, he wrote to Pauline telling her how much it grieved him to feel that his duty and his manhood, both, demanded of him a sacrifice which he felt must grieve her, but that he still hoped some compromise might be effected, which would change the *status* of affairs, and prevent further bloodshed.

Charlie Holmes had received a very painful, though not serious, wound, and the weary hours of convalescence were greatly enlivened by the fact of his having been removed to Mrs. Grey's residence, where he was nursed by Belle and Mrs. Grey with all the care that they could have bestowed upon poor Frank. Nor did this prevent them from going daily to the hospitals, and taking such things as the wounded of both armies would be sure to relish.

The lounge, occupied by Charlie, had been rolled to a cool spot in the hall one morning, and Belle was reading aloud to him; she was presently interrupted by a servant bringing her several letters. Breaking the seal of one, she was soon absorbed in its contents, while Charlie picked up the envelope she had carelessly thrown aside, and immediately recognized Pauline's handwriting.

"Won't you read me that letter, Miss Belle?" he presently asked, "I really think I deserve all the comfort I can get now."

But Belle, unheedingly, read on to herself, the smile which her face wore, and which had provoked Charlie's request, soon disappeared, and with a touch of sadness in her tone as she quietly folded the letter again, said:

"I do not believe you would enjoy hearing it, and I am quite sure the writer would object to it."

"Well, I suppose I did wrong to ask, and you must excuse me," he rejoined, in a disappointed tone.

"She speaks of you very kindly and expresses great regret that you should have been wounded," said Belle.

"I am extremely grateful," said Charlie, in an ironical manner; "tell her when you write that flesh wounds do not amount to much, beyond the inconvenience."

"Miss Belle," he continued, presently, in earnest tones, "I have a haunting suspicion that you have never been my friend in this affair."

"Indeed, Charlie," returned Belle, with feeling, "you have certainly misunderstood me, and in justice to myself I must tell you what I never did before, that since Pauline first began to evince a preference for Mr. Appleton's society I have tried in every way that I could, to laugh her out of it. I confess that in the first place, when they met at Belmont at Christmas, and she seemed so prejudiced against him, that I did try to do away with those feelings, more on dear Frank's account than anything else, because as his friend I wanted to make it as pleasant for him as possible."

"You admit then," said Charlie, with interest," that she showed a preference for him."

"Yes," she rejoined, "I will not attempt to conceal that fact from you. I thought that, of course, his joining the Yankee army would make her feel differently toward him, but it does not seem to have done so, from this letter. Pauline has always been so much admired and petted that I am afraid the opposition she would meet in her preference will only make her more determined; then she is young and sentimental. It is so romantic, you know, to cling to a hopeless fancy. Maybe she will be brought to her senses when she has a little more experience," added Belle, laughingly.

"You give me great encouragement," said Charlie, with an attempt at a smile; "you think that when she grows old and un-

attractive (as if that time could ever come) and there is little left to interest her in life, that then, maybe, it is *possible*, that I might have a shadow of a chance. Verily, Miss Belle, your crumbs of consolation are few and small."

Happily for Belle, visitors now interrupted further conversation, for in the attempt to defend her absent friend, and too great a regard for Charlie to wish to deceive him at all, she had quite entangled herself, and felt great relief at being thus extricated from her awkward position.

A few days after this conversation, Belle received a letter from her mother, requiring her return home, where she found many changes had taken place during her long absence. The quiet old town of Winchester, near which they lived, had been occupied by the Confederate troops for some weeks. Many of the public buildings had been converted into hospitals and barracks, while all around the town, dotted here and there, were to be seen the tents of the different encampments. The sounds of "revielle" and "taps" had taken the place of the "anvil chorus" and saw and hammer, those welcome signals of peace and prosperity, while gaily-caparisoned steeds, mounted by plumed and braided knights, were customary sights.

The short period of service, hard as some of it had been, had scarcely dimmed the luster of their new uniforms, and, though many dear ones had fallen, there was a feeling of buoyancy and cheerfulness, which inspired all with confidence of ultimate success, and all privations were cheerfully endured, while the young people of the community culled as much of pleasure from the fleeing moments as they might.

It was one of those late September evenings, when all nature seems at rest, and mere existence a delightful boon—one of those evenings, the sweet witchery of which we all can remember. Even the cows, as they strolled lazily along on their homeward way, seemed to catch the infection, the soft, sweet tinkle of an occasional bell denoting their leisurely motion. The sun was

just sinking into the west, and the fleecy clouds which crowned the mountain's crest were bathed in the mellow glow of its waning light, while a languid restfulness brooded over all.

In striking contrast to this repose in nature, and breaking rudely on the dreamy air, could be heard the tones of an officer's voice as he carried his command through all the evolutions required by Hardee. Presently the swelling strains of Dixie reach the ear, and before very long the evening drill is over and the soldiers break ranks and throng around their friends, who daily on such occasions cheer and encourage them by their presence. This was a special occasion, as Captain Randolph's company had that day gotten a box from home, and they had issued invitations to several of their friends to take tea with them. Accordingly, as soon as the parade was over they repaired to the neighboring encampment.

We recognize among them our old friends, Belle Harvey and Carrie Mason. The somber black of Belle's costume brings out the clear complexion, and her speaking, dark blue eyes are softened by an expression of sadness. Young John Randolph, whose collar is now ornamented with a captain's bars, soon offers Belle his arm, and leads her to the seat of honor by the large flat rock which serves as their table.

And never were smoking viands, served on silver salvers and spotless linen, more keenly relished than this rustic meal. The rays of the declining sun seem loth to leave the gypsy scene, and cling lingeringly to the stacks of burnished muskets near.

"Allow me," said Captain Thomas, one of the guests from a neighboring company, and who had just arrived, "to suggest that we crown a queen of this gypsy-like scene. A Rubens could not desire a more worthy subject for his canvas," he added, as he paused to gather some bright leaves from the tree overhead.

"You have certainly thrown an apple of discord into our happy midst," said Belle, archly, "for how shall we decide who is worthy to wear the honor."

"ALLOW ME," SAID CAPTAIN THOMAS, "TO SUGGEST THAT WE CROWN A QUEEN OF THIS GYPSY-LIKE SCENE."

"That would indeed be a difficult task," said young Gooch, a private in the company, "and one which I would prefer a braver man than myself should undertake."

"In the absence of a Paris, suppose we let the ladies decide themselves by secret ballot," said Captain Thomas, who had not realized the difficulties of his proposition until after making it.

"Then I am sure," said Carrie Mason, laughingly, "that that would not decide it, for we should each vote for ourselves."

Just then Sambo, a pleasant-faced darky, who served as cook for the mess, brought some hot biscuits.

"Let us refer it to Sambo, there," said Randolph; "he is a gentleman of penetration. Tell us, Sam," continued he, holding aloft a wreath of bright leaves which had been hastily woven, "which of these ladies shall we crown as our queen?"

"De one ober dar to de right o' you, Mars John, ef you please," answered Sam at once, and showing his ivories. The readiness of the answer seeming to prove that he had previously considered the matter, while Belle blushed and bent her head as all eyes were turned on her.

"Well, Sam," said Captain Thomas, laughing, "I have a curiosity to know what decided you so quickly?"

"Yah, yah, Massa," laughed Sam, "she's a 'preciatin' young lady; she dun eat fo' o' my biscuits fur her suppa, an' 'tain't cause she's hungry nuff to eat chips, like you young gemmens is, but she know good biscuit when she see 'em."

This explanation provoked a hearty laugh on all sides, while Belle blushingly protested that she had eaten but three, but would eat another if thereby she would become entitled to wear the pretty chaplet. So, amid universal acclamation, the wreath was placed on her head, and served to lend an additional charm to her face.

Amid such pleasantries the evening passed, until, as the long twilight deepened into night, the party dispersed. Randolph had escorted Belle to her home, and remained until bed-time.

In returning to camp he overtook Sambo, also slowly returning by the same route.

"Hello, Sam, what time o' night is this for you to be out?"

"Jes' a waitin' for you, sah; I knowed you'd be 'long presently. I ain't got no kuntersine, en I counted on you passin' me in. I seed who you went home wid, Mars John, an' I knowed you'd stay tell de las' mortal minnit."

"You rascal! how did you happen to be so wise?" answered his master.

"Lawd, Mars John, ain't I got eyes, an' dis here nigger don't keep 'em shet, nuther," answered Sam, with a knowing chuckle.

"Come, Sam, now that we are alone, and tell me really why you decided so quickly to crown Miss Harvey to-night at supper?" asked Randolph, as he and his sable friend walked along the road together.

"Didn't I fool 'em all, dough?" said Sam, with his expressive chuckle. "'Sposen I didn't know which lady you wanted to w'ar de wreaf, Mars John? Yah, yah," he laughed, as he thought it over again. "Jes' turned it off on de biscuits. Dis niggah ain't no fool, Mars John."

"Really, Sambo, I did not know you were such a diplomat," said Randolph, laughing in spite of himself.

"'Fore de Lawd, Mars John, what am *dat?*" he asked, in alarmed tones.

"Well, nothing very dreadful—that is, not always; so don't be uneasy," answered his master.

Randolph was beginning to realize himself that there was ground for Sambo's suspicion.

A few days afterward Sambo came to request the countersign, as he had been invited to a ball at a farm in the neighborhood, and did not expect to return until late. Captain Thomas and Gooch, hearing of it, decided to attend also; though not receiving an invitation, they knew it would afford them much amusement. Accordingly, after walking across the country,

they reached a cabin which lay on the outskirts of a large farm. Not being expected, their knowledge of the exact locality was limited, and, determining to leave it to chance to find out, they sat themselves down on a fallen log to await developments.

Presently, the notes of a greasy fiddle were heard in an adjoining cabin, which now decided the matter. It was evidently tuning up for the occasion, and soon the crowd that began to collect proved that they had not been mistaken. After carrying the fiddle through the squeaking and screwing, which always seems a necessary preface to a successful performance on it, the musician, a sleek-looking African, yelled in a stentorian voice: "Git yer gal!" and then applied himself with energy to the instrument before him. The floor was soon filled, and the dancing became fast and furious.

A convenient crack in one side of the cabin furnished our friends with a point of observation; but the air soon became redolent of odors that did not originate in Araby, and our friends found it necessary to withdraw now and then in order to inhale a fresh supply of unadulterated oxygen.

After awhile the crowd thinned out, and one figure alone remained in the center of the room, while the others ranged themselves around as spectators. The fiddle (a darkey couldn't dance with the same spirit after the music of a *violin*) now commenced the most irresistible of jigs, and we recognize our friend Sambo as the cynosure of all eyes. He claps his knees with both hands, then spins around and jumps high into the air —all while scarce three notes have been sounded—then begins a double-shuffle movement, interspersed with back-steps and side-steps, and other double-jointed actions, till you would think he must surely fly to pieces. This is kept up for the space of fifteen minutes, when he abruptly makes a break for the door, and is soon followed by the crowd, who also come outside to "cool off" and rest.

Meanwhile, our friends, who did not wish to be seen, crouched still closer in the shadow of the wall. They soon observed an elderly negro man of immense proportions walk into the room, seemingly oblivious of what had been going on and which might be resumed at any moment, take the one tallow candle which lighted the apartment, in addition to the blazing logs on the hearth, and place it on the "dresser." After seating himself in front of it, with his back to the room, he fished from the depths of his pocket a piece of broken looking-glass about the size of his hand, and proceeded to set it up in front of him on its jagged edges.

After spending some time in establishing its equilibrium, he took from another pocket a shaving apparatus and soon commenced to whitewash his countenance with soap-suds. By the time this was accomplished the revelers returned and soon resumed their dance; but "Uncle Harry," seemingly unconscious of the intrusion, drew forth a well-worn razor, and, after taking it through as many manipulations as the fiddle had undergone, placed it at right angles with the lower jaw, and, causing his mouth to retreat to the side of his face, exposed an unwrinkled front for the application of the instrument. Now, as only a portion of his big face could be seen at a time in the small glass before him, it required considerable dexterity to get it at the exact focus. Finally succeeding, he was about to apply the razor, when "Promenade all!" was shouted by the fiddler, and the earthquake which followed brought down the fated mirror.

"Dern dem fool niggers!" he ejaculated with energy, and scowling around upon the company from over his lathered countenance sat patiently waiting for another quiet moment, seemingly unconscious of his ludicrous appearance.

Neither his advent nor his efforts to shave had been observed by the revelers, and now for the first time they seemed to notice him as he turned around and faced them.

"Good Lawdy!" exclaimed Ruth, who had accompanied

Stephen to the ball, "Uncle Harry think he gwine ter skeer us all home, I believe. He sholy do look like a ghos', dough."

"He big 'nuff an' ugly 'nuff to skeer us all away widouten whitenin' hisse'f dat ar way," said Stephen, angrily, regarding him with the corner of his eye, as if afraid to trust the entire orb to his ghostly influence.

"'Pon my soul," said Susan, who had come with Sam, and spied Uncle Harry now for the first time, "Uncle Harry dun sholy los' he senses. Jes' look at him! I ain't 'feard o' him, dough; is you, Sam?" she continued, in trembling tones.

"I ain't so sho," answered her partner; "Uncle Harry skeers white fokes sometimes, an' dey tells me he kin *conjah*.* Mebbe, dat is what he tryin' to do now, settin' dar so still," he continued, with a furtive glance over his shoulder at the object of their fears.

But, notwithstanding their protestations that Uncle Harry couldn't "skeer 'em," the abandoned spirit of mirth which had previously pervaded the assembly was slowly subsiding. There Uncle Harry still sat, as immovable as Gibraltar, grim determination stamped upon his brow, though lather concealed his firm-set lips. His two enormous feet, encased only in his stockings, were piled in front of him, for he had made up his mind to shave on that spot that night, and he intended to do it.

The company, finally comprehending the situation, yielded the field, when he again returned to his original purpose.

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* There exists even yet with the colored race a belief that there are those among them who possess certain mysterious powers, which they can exercise at pleasure against persons who offend them.

CHAPTER X.

BELMONT was once more the scene of festivity. General Jackson, though not often indulging in social pleasures, had consented to take his Christmas dinner with Mrs. Harvey. Belle assists her mother in dispensing the hospitalities for which the old house had so long been famous, while Charlie Holmes and John Randolph are once again among the guests. The quiet dinner is in striking contrast to the gayeties of the previous winter, though vividly recalling the faces of the absent, and especially that of the dear one who had yielded up his young life and crossed the dark river so early in the struggle.

The blue cockade had been laid aside as no longer a necessary badge of distinction where only one sentiment prevailed.

"I wonder what has become of Appleton?" said Randolph during dinner. "Charlie, have you kept up with his movements?"

"Well, yes," returned Charlie, "in a measure. I heard that he was on McClellan's staff."

"I wonder how in the world he heard it?" queried Randolph, turning to Belle with a significant smile.

"Probably, I got my information from Miss Carrie here," returned Charlie, "who, you remember, tried so hard to make a proselyte of him last winter."

At this, the troublesome color which was always betraying our little friend rushed to her face, as she answered:

"I am sure that was my duty; was it not, general?" appealing to General Jackson, who sat opposite, and who had been listening to their conversation, much amused.

"I fear he was unworthy game if he remained proof against your efforts, Miss Carrie," he answered, pleasantly.

"He was at least a conscientious fellow," said John, "for it

required considerable moral courage to stem the tide of feeling against him at college."

"Well, Miss Carrie, if you have another chance at him, make a bold dash, cut off his retreat, and burn the bridges, and, if I am not mistaken, he will capitulate," said the general, with a mischievous gleam in his usually earnest eyes.

"Indeed, general, they have exaggerated my passing fancy for Mr. Appleton. I did like him at first, I confess, but when he persisted in wearing the Union badge I began to lose my interest, and when I heard he had joined the Yankee army I positively disliked him," answered Carrie, in an apologetic tone.

The conversation was here interrupted by a servant bringing a note to General Jackson. An officer awaited him in the hall with dispatches from Richmond, ordering an attack on the railroad in West Virginia. It broke up the dinner party very unceremoniously, as the order was peremptory, and before night Jackson's entire command was getting ready to move. The treacherous sunshine and mild atmosphere of the morning had been succeeded by colder weather, and near the close of the day the lowering sky and keen blasts promised anything but a fair 'morrow. This prospect, however, seemed no damper to the enthusiastic troops; where Jackson led, they were willing to follow.

Those of the soldiers who had homes in the neighborhood were allowed a short absence to take leave of their friends, and, in a neatly-kept parlor, in the house of a tradesman, we recognize the manly figure of our old friend, Jacob Wilder. He is awaiting the coming of the girl who has his heart in her keeping, and a noble, manly heart it is. His finely-developed form is encased in a full suit of Confederate gray, having long since laid aside that of the old "Continentals," whose organization claimed existence from the time of the Revolution, and in whose ranks he had first enlisted. He had grown a veteran in the service, having taken part in every battle in which his command had been engaged, though, so far, had escaped unhurt.

Presently, the door opened and in came the girl for whom he waited. Scarcely a woman in years, standing just "where the brook and the river meet," the bright, open face was a fair index of the heart within. It now expressed an interested surprise, as she raised it to Jacob, for she had been hastily summoned.

"I came to bid you good-bye, Jennie," said Jacob, presently.

"Why, what is the matter and where are you going?" she asked, in almost the same breath.

"Old Jack is going to move toward the North-west, that is all we know and it's enough. Everything is getting ready to move and by this time to-morrow we will be far away from here," answered Jacob.

"It is too bad that the weather should have turned so cold; indeed, I am afraid you all will freeze, dear Jacob," she answered, thoughtfully.

"It's pretty cold, I know, but I expect he knows what he is about. I am sure I don't," he returned, smiling.

"I have not given you my Christmas gift yet," she said, and excusing herself left the room; presently returning she brings a bright comforter, which she wound around his neck, "and you must take this also," she added, unfolding a soft, warm shawl.

"What will you do without it, Jennie? I am afraid you will need it yourself," answered Jacob.

"No, indeed, I have another, or at least mother has; I can get along very well without it anyhow and you must take it, for I know you will need it," she returned.

"Won't you go and see my mother sometimes, little one?" asked Jacob, affectionately.

"She does not like me, Jacob," answered Jennie; "she says I made you a rebel, and, darling, you know it was your own true sense of right that did it, wasn't it?"

"It was, indeed, and if I could only bring my father and mother to look at this thing in its real light, I would feel much

better satisfied. They think that because you made the blue cockade which I wore at first that you influenced me; and, indeed, I have tried to look at it their way but can not. I must now say good bye and go to see the dear old people, too, maybe for the last time."

"O, Jacob, dear, don't talk in that way, it takes away my strength. I know you will come back safe," said Jennie, with choking voice.

"I hope so, little one, for your sake;" then bidding her a silent farewell, left, without once looking back, as if afraid to trust himself. But Jennie, going to the window, gazed after his well-known figure until it passed out of sight. If her heart could be more wrapped in anything than the cause he represented, it was Jacob himself.

The troops marched next day in the direction of Bath, with as proud and firm a step as if keeping time to the music of a mid-summer holiday. They had only a general idea of where they were going, but perfect confidence in their leader and faith in the righteousness of their cause enabled them to bear with fortitude the perils and suffering of that memorable expedition, for which we search modern history in vain to find a parallel, unless we follow Napoleon through his campaigns in Russia.

The weather grew colder every hour and a blinding snow fell incessantly. The cutting wind heaped it in drifts as fast as it fell, soon rendering the roads almost impassable. Now followed dreary days of anxious waiting, in which no tidings came from the absent ones. Then, for the first time, the soldiers, as well as their friends, began to question the wisdom of the movement. It is about this time that the first and only breath of censure against that matchless leader, Jackson, is whispered.

Soon the ambulances began to come in, bringing those disabled by the cold, and later, the wounded, in the fighting which ensued. It was on one of the coldest evenings of that memorable winter, that Jennie Dwyer, thinking so constantly of

Jacob that it made her suspicious that some harm had befallen him, got herself ready to go and see his mother, hoping to hear, through her, of her absent lover. The old lady had never taken very kindly to Jennie, thinking she had influenced Jacob in the course he had taken, gladly laying the blame at the door of some one else than her boy.

Jennie's timid knock was answered by a summons to "come in." She found the old lady in great distress and bustling confusion. A message had been received that poor Jacob had been badly wounded and was on his way home. His father had gone with an ambulance to meet him, and make him as comfortable as possible. Jennie's grief was naturally great at this disclosure, but made doubly so when Jacob's mother upbraided her with being the cause of it all.

"Indeed, madam," said the poor girl, "even if Jacob had thought as you do, he would have fought all the same, and the danger would have been as great as now."

"No," she answered, "we could have gone home, and he could have hired somebody to go in his place."

"Jacob hire somebody to do his duty for him? *Never, never* would he have done it I am sure," she exclaimed, contemptously, "his keen sense of justice makes him see our wrongs in their true light, and, dear Mrs. Wilder," she continued, "why, can't you see that the Yankees are trying to take all our rights away from us and make us worse than the slaves they are trying to free? Jacob says so, and he says, too, that no true man or woman, either, ought to stand it."

At this implied imputation from her son, the old lady fell to weeping.

"My dear Mrs. Wilder," continued Jennie, touched at the old lady's grief, "of course it is not with you, though, as if you had been born and raised here."

"If I had only never come here," sobbed the old lady, "my boy might now be safe and well."

Jennie could no longer restrain her own tears at mention of Jacob's misfortune, and for a few moments both were silent.

At sight of Jennie's grief, the old lady soon mastered her own, and rising abruptly, said:

"I must get ready for Jacob now, so good evening," and left the room.

Thus coolly dismissed, Jennie got up to go, though resolving to return as soon as Jacob was known to have arrived.

Each succeeding hour brought fresh arrivals of the wounded and sick. The object of the expedition had been achieved, but few victories had been more dearly purchased.

It was to the valiant Ashby, "the knight without fear or reproach," who flashed with meteoric splendor athwart the Southern firmament, that this expedition owed much of its success, and the bright record which he bequeathed to posterity, in his short career, challenges universal admiration.

Soon the old town of Winchester becomes one vast hospital; the buildings appropriated by the Government for that purpose not affording sufficient accommodation, the private houses are crowded, and the entire female population devote themselves to the work of preparing dainties and nursing the sick and wounded. Mrs. Harvey goes as a ministering angel among them, and even "Aunt Maria" belongs to a visiting committee. Overcoming all her old-time scruples, she goes daily to the hospitals, laden with delicacies prepared by her own hand.

The time had come when she could no longer indulge in the melancholy pleasure of saying "I told you so." Even her astute powers of divination were nonplused, as the rapidly-hurrying events were weaving a history, surpassing in horrors and heroism the bloodiest days of the Revolution. Tidings from Holmes and Randolph said they were safe except a few frost-bites.

Jennie made constant inquiry for the arrival of her lover, and was at last rewarded by hearing that he had come. She could not learn the extent of his wounds, as his mother pre-

vented her from seeing him, and her numerous questions received very unsatisfactory answers.

"The doctor says he must be kept quiet," she said, in an exultant tone, in answer to Jennie's question, as if glad that his authority sustained her own pleasure in the matter.

"But I will be so quiet," said Jennie, pleadingly, "and will help you to nurse him, too, Mrs. Wilder, if you will only let me. Mother says I am a real good nurse; mayn't I?"

"I do not need any one to help me," she returned, exulting in her power to inflict pain on the girl, as she stood holding the door, evidently impatient for the interview to end. Jennie made one more effort, though scarce able to restrain her tears.

"Won't you let me do something for him, if I can't see him?"

"I can do all for him that he needs; you have already done enough," she answered.

Both grief and anger strove for the mastery in Jennie's breast, as, with reluctant steps, she quitted Mrs. Wilder's cottage. She knew that Jacob would see her if allowed, and could not think how he would account for her absence. Meantime, Mrs. Wilder returned to her son's room. The poor fellow had been badly wounded in the leg and head, and the surgeons feared it would be necessary to amputate the limb. The wound in the head proving more serious, too, than was at first supposed, rendering him unconscious much of the time.

The suit of gray uniform was now folded away, his mother hoped, forever out of his sight, and the blue cockade which Jennie had pinned on so proudly a short twelve-month ago was ruthlessly tossed into the fire.

As day after day passed by, and his lucid intervals became fewer, he would talk incessantly of Jennie, and upbraid her with forgetting him, which suspicion his mother did all she could to strengthen.

"What has become of Jennie, mother?" he asked one day, in an interval of consciousness.

"The forward minx is flirting with the soldiers, I suppose," she answered, heartlessly, "but you must keep quiet, my son, and not think of her."

He did not attempt an answer, for in his heart he felt that his mother did Jennie injustice, though little dreaming how far she had carried her persecutions. Meanwhile, poor Jennie's heart was breaking as she heard from the neighbors of Jacob's extreme illness. Finally, her native wit came to her aid, and she bethought herself of the surgeon that attended him. Seeking him out, she made known her trouble.

Dr. Green received what she communicated as a revelation, and, wisely shaking his head, said she should see Jacob at all hazards.

"Poor fellow," he continued, "that accounts for a great deal which I have heretofore been unable to understand. Write to him, child, and I will myself deliver the letter."

Accordingly, on his next visit he carried a letter from Jennie to Jacob, and fortunately found him conscious, though weak and suffering, having undergone the amputation of the wounded leg some days before.

"See," said he, holding aloft Jennie's letter, when they were left alone, "I have brought you the best medicine yet," and the first smile he had seen on his patient's face, though feeble, was gladly welcomed by him. Jacob greedily devoured the contents, and as the doctor watched the effects of this new prescription, he immediately understood why the work of convalescence had progressed so slowly, and resolved that Jennie should see him in spite of the opposition from his parents.

Jonathan Wilder and his wife, on the other hand, felt that they were gaining the mastery over their recreant son once more, and their one hope now was to remove him from Winchester as soon as possible, looking upon his wound as a providential circumstance, which placed him in the helpless condition that enabled them to control him.

It now became evident that the forces under Jackson and Ashby, which had been so depleted by the recent hard service, would have to contract their line, and the citizens felt that they would soon lose the protection of the military. The Federals had been largely re-enforced, and gave evidences of an early advance. Jonathan Wilder watched the movements of the troops with great interest, and took every opportunity to find out their strength and destination.

Known to be in sympathy with the Federals, he was generally mistrusted, though naturally he saw a great deal, and, in order to quicken the advance of his friends, he resolved to give them the benefit of what knowledge he had gained. Accordingly, he went to the remotest point within the Confederate lines, well knowing that he could not procure a pass to go beyond. There he waited, as patiently as he could, until the pickets were withdrawn within his location. He now was very soon among his friends, and made known his plans to the nearest official.

He told them that his only son had joined the rebels against his wishes, was now wounded and helpless in his hands, and that he wished to take advantage of his situation to remove him as soon as possible from the evil influences that surrounded him where he was, the most dangerous of which being a rebel sweetheart, who, he seemed to think, had wrought all the mischief. When safely beyond her reach, he hoped his son would once more listen to reason, and, when well enough, accept some position under the government, as his wounds would unfit him for active service again.

To all this the officer lent a willing ear. He would be only too glad to aid in so laudable a project. He had no doubt that the rebels were falling back, and he thought that the policy of the government would be to pursue them, keeping, of course, at a respectful distance, and he gave Jonathan Wilder every reason to hope that they would soon occupy Winchester. All this time poor Jacob lay unconscious of the conspiracy against him.

During Jonathan's absence, Doctor Green managed to effect the wished-for meeting between Jennie and her lover. Going to Mrs. Wilder one morning, he said :

"Madam, if you value your son's life at all, I advise you to allow him to see this Jennie, of whom he raves so continually. I will not answer for his reason if you continue to thwart him in this, even should his life be spared."

"It is only his imagination, doctor," she answered, coldly, "and if he sees her it will do more harm than good "

"Very well, madam; of course it is for you to say," said the doctor, rising as if to go, "but the consequences be upon your own head," he added, ominously.

"Do you really believe that his life depends upon it, doctor?" asked the old lady, beginning to relent at the dismal prospect held out by the doctor.

"I unhesitatingly do, madam," he answered, in his most professional tone.

Remembering the mission upon which her husband had gone, and thinking that Jacob would now so soon be removed from Jennie's bad influences, Mrs. Wilder finally gave a reluctant consent. With all speed, the kind doctor now went after Jennie, whom he found waiting, as he had told her of his intentions. Together they went to the cottage, and he ingeniously contrived to detain Mrs. Wilder in conversation during the interview between the lovers.

The retreat of the army now began in good earnest, and the citizens commenced to provide for the danger which seemed imminent. Mrs. Harvey had thought of abandoning her home and going South, but now that the time had come she concluded to remain and do what she could to protect it, hoping that the occupation by the enemy would be of short duration.

The next morning, armed with the doctor's authority, Jennie once more presented herself at Mrs. Wilder's door, but, as he did not accompany her, she failed to effect an entrance, and,

with a heavy, troubled heart, she turned her face homeward again.

During that night Winchester was evacuated, and next day the advance of the enemy made its appearance. Among the first to arrive was Jonathan Wilder, and he made all haste to place the unresisting prisoner in his hands in an ambulance, and, together with his wife, they soon turned their backs on their old home. No one saw the departure, and when next Jennie came the closed blinds and general air of desertion which the cottage wore gave her a sharp pang, as she at first thought "Jacob must be dead;" but soon convincing herself that no one was there she turned with a sad step to her home once more.

CHAPTER XI.

IT is the 22d of February, 1862, the day set apart for the inauguration of Jefferson Davis as President of the Confederate States. Richmond, the fair city of hills, has been chosen as the capital, and her hospitable streets are thronged with all classes, from far and near, eager to witness the ceremony. Even the dismal rain, which pours incessantly, does not seem to dampen the interest which exists, and, though keeping many away, one scarcely missed them.

The imposing ceremony took place on Capitol Hill, Mr. Davis standing at the base of the equestrian statue of the "Father of His Country," whose unsheathed sword is held aloft in one hand, while with the other he points encouragingly toward the South. On either side of him stand life-like representations of George Mason and Thomas Jefferson, and, if greater inspiration is needed for the transaction, look further still, and you behold the massive form of Patrick Henry as he stands with the roll of parchment in his hand. The bronze lips are almost ready to part, and you seem to hear the thunder of his voice as he says: "Give me liberty or give me death."

Presently, the oath of office is administered by the Chief-Justice, and through all that vast throng is scarce heard a murmur as Mr. Davis responds in solemn and impressive tones. A venerable bishop of the Church now importunes heaven's approval and blessing, and the ceremony of inauguration is accomplished. How sadly in earnest were they all!

In a crowded window of the Capitol building, which overlooked the scene, we recognize the familiar faces of Pauline Rhett and Charlie Holmes, the latter having come to Richmond with dispatches from the Valley, and Pauline's home, for the present, being also at the capital, as her father represents his State in the Confederate Senate.

Mr. Davis holds his first levee that night in a handsome brown-stone residence, which has been set apart for his use. The spacious apartments are thronged with the brave and the fair, all eager to pay their respects to the man they delight to honor, who stands there the central figure, receiving and entertaining his friends with that courtly grace of manner which always so conspicuously distinguished him. The military uniforms with which the rooms are interspersed add to the brilliancy of the scene, and right hard it would have been to realize that the glory and beauty of this young republic was to be only an exhalation. At that period of its existence there were few indeed who did not religiously believe in its ultimate triumph.

Again we recognize Pauline Rhett as she leans upon Charlie's arm and advances with queenly gait to be presented to the President. Much of the old buoyancy of her girlhood seems to have left her, and she appears the mature, fully-developed woman.

Many throng around her, some renewing old acquaintance and others seeking to be introduced; among them, Major Hughes, a brave young Alabamian and former schoolmate of Charlie's, whose empty coat-sleeve bears silent witness to the fact that he has been to the front.

The change in Pauline's manner had at last attracted her mother's notice, and she was now all anxiety to find out the cause of it, but nothing transpired which furnished a clue.

"Pauline, dear," she exclaimed upon entering her daughter's room the morning following the levee, "what on earth ails you? You have not been yourself for months, and it distresses me no little to see you so changed."

"I am only getting older, mother, and take more serious views of things, I suppose," she answered with a forced laugh. "You know that all of those we most dearly love are in the army and in constant danger of their lives. Is not that enough to make even a giddy girl thoughtful?"

"Yes, yes; I admit that it is," answered her mother with a

sigh, as she thought of her two brave boys so constantly exposed to danger. Pauline had never mentioned Appleton's name to any of her family, and now that he had joined the Federal army she well knew that there would be little hope in doing so.

She tried to think he was unworthy, and strove in every way to banish him from her thoughts, but the question would ever come back to her: "What would the love of a man be worth who would sacrifice principle to passion?" And, in spite of her heroic efforts to forget him, his image was constantly before her with the hopeless look it wore the last time she had seen him.

Charlie's opportune visit was gladly welcomed by Mrs. Rhett, as she had somehow connected him with her daughter's altered manner. Pauline, now anxious to relieve her mother's fears, resolves to forget Appleton, and, forcing a gayety which she does not feel, once more her rippling laugh is heard through the house, though now and then it startles even herself.

Upon calling, one morning, Charlie found her at the piano; begging her to continue playing, he drew his seat very near, and, resting his head on the back of his chair, closed his eyes, as if to shut out the outside world and resign himself wholly to the potent charm of her wonderful music.

Presently Pauline, in either a spirit of mischief or thoughtlessness, commenced a favorite air of Charlie's which he had not heard since the Christmas they had spent together at Belmont, when he, looking up quickly, said:

"Excuse me, Miss Pauline, but please do not play that, it has lost its attraction for me now, even when played by you."

"Well, that is a gallant speech, Mr. Holmes, I must confess—pray why has it fallen under the ban?" asked Pauline, laughing.

"It is associated with a period of my life of which I do not care to be reminded," he answered, quite seriously.

"I will stop playing altogether; I suspect you are tired listening," said Pauline, quickly, and rising from the piano.

"No, not that; you know that is not the reason, but I believe

I do want you to talk to me now and charm away some of the blue spirits that those old airs have conjured up. You have no idea what a wonderful incentive music is on the eve of a battle, or the powerful effect it has in sustaining one's courage."

"Do I not, though?" said Pauline, with a half-suppressed sigh. "It is my panacea for many woes; I play away a great many sad moments."

"It is difficult to associate you with sad moments, or imagine why you should ever have any," said Charlie.

"I suppose it must arise from the natural perversity of my woman's nature," she returned, looking demurely in the fire; "for I certainly have much for which to be grateful and make me glad."

"So you admit, then," said Charlie, laughingly, "that woman is by nature perverse?"

"No, no," she answered, "I am only quoting the opinion of men when I say so."

"You can at least tell me," pursued Charlie, "if the opinion is a correct one in your case?"

"That is a question which would not be admitted before a jury, I think," said Pauline, evasively.

"Umph! I think you are illustrating the question at issue if you will permit me to say so," said Charlie, boldly, "but you must pardon my interest on this point."

"O, yes," she returned, pleasantly," on the principle I suppose that soldiers are excusable for anything."

"No; I do not want to be excused on that ground, by you at least," he answered, tenderly.

"It seems impossible for us to agree this morning," said Pauline, growing alarmed at the tone the conversation was assuming, for if there was anything she honestly wished to avoid, it was a declaration from Charlie's lips.

She liked him too well to appear unkind to him, but not enough for anything more.

"That brings us back to the original question," said Charlie, in answer to her last remark. "Tell me, really, Miss Pauline, does any lurking perversity (which we will allow you possess for the sake of the argument only) ever make you persist in a thing against your judgment—or feeling?" he added, after a slight pause, and watching her narrowly he noticed her drop her eyes as if to avoid his scrutiny.

"I don't understand you," she said, presently, in faltering tones.

"Or, rather, I am afraid you do too well for my own good," he said, earnestly, and soon took his leave.

Charlie had resolutely made up his mind to say nothing to Pauline on the subject nearest his heart, unless she should give him some unmistakable encouragement, and he too readily interpreted her recent kindness and warm welcome as favorable to his suit. True, she still puzzled him greatly, but the time for returning to his command was rapidly drawing near, and a few days later he bent his steps in the direction of Colonel Rhett's residence for the last time.

It was a mild night in the latter part of February, the air was balmy with the breath of the early Southern spring, while the full moon shed the mellow radiance of a later season over the environed city. Under its subtle influence, probably, Charlie made up his mind to have some understanding with Pauline, as he expected to return to his command the next day. His proposition to walk out and enjoy the beauties of the night was readily assented to, from which he chose to argue favorably. An embarrassing silence oppressed them both for some moments; at last, as if unable to endure it longer, Charlie spoke in the tones of a man who had nerved himself for an ordeal.

"Pauline, do you know why I have asked you for this walk?" and he felt her arm tremble as she tried to answer lightly.

"You said the moonlight was so beautiful."

"Yes, that was one reason," and he hesitated, brave fellow

though he was. "I wanted you very near me," he continued, "while I told you something, which I have been trying not to tell for some time, and something, too, which I am convinced you already know. Tell me, Pauline, is there any hope for me?" he continued, desperately.

Pauline kept her face averted and did not answer. Charlie continued: "I have looked forward to, and longed so eagerly for, this time, and after all am I to be disappointed?" Still no answer came from Pauline.

"For God's sake don't tell me that you love another—spare me that at any rate," said Charlie, excitedly.

"Mr. Holmes," came the low tones of her voice at last, "I had hoped to avoid this, but I will tell you now in all truthfulness that which you ask is impossible. What you would offer is of priceless value, and if, from a sense of right and duty, I should accept what you so generously bestow, I fear the future might prove that I had wronged your noble heart, and in justice to you I bid you cease to indulge any hope. I can not help it; it seems my fate, and I deserve your pity rather than your blame."

"Then my worst fears are realized," answered Charlie, with deep feeling. "I am not only rejected, but what I earnestly desire is gratuitously bestowed upon a Yankee, your country's enemy!"

Suddenly he felt her hand withdrawn from his arm, and she interrupted him.

"I thought you were too generous to take advantage of me in this way. I do not deserve it. I am true to my country and my people; beyond that I can not go, and it is best that we understand each other thoroughly."

They pursued their way in silence for a short distance, then Charlie, gently taking her hand, drew it within his arm again.

"Forgive me, Pauline, but it nearly maddens me to think of this barrier to my happiness. It *is* best that we understand each other thoroughly. Miss Belle was kinder to me than I thought."

"Don't let us talk of it any more, I feel so unhappy," said Pauline, sadly.

"Be assured I shall not mention so unpleasant a subject again. I leave for the Valley to-morrow, and will seek oblivion in my country's service. It is a noble altar, well worthy a better sacrifice," said Charlie, in despairing tones.

"It grieves me so to hear you talk in that way. Forget me; I am not worthy of you," she said, appealingly.

They now reached the door of her home. "God bless you!" said Charlie, snatching her hand and imprinting a burning kiss; "when next you see me—if ever—you will know how well I can forget." Then rushing headlong down the steps, he was soon out of sight.

Pauline seemed transfixed to the spot; she could not realize that he had absolutely gone, but stood gazing out into the moonlit street vainly trying to distinguish his retreating form. "His parting words were so hopeless; why can't I love this man as he deserves, and forget the one who is enemy to all I hold most dear?" she communed with herself, after reaching her room.

"Oh, that fatal Christmas! could I but blot it from my calendar!" And the earnest, wistful face as she last saw it rose before her mind's eye, as if to plead the cause of her absent lover. "Why can't I hear something from him? This secrecy and anxiety are slowly killing me! If he really cares for me, would he not make some effort to communicate with me, and at least let me know that he is safe and still loves me?"

Now, her pride would whisper that no true knight would treat his lady so. But her loyalty passed unscathed through the ordeal, and her woman's unreasoning reason, fostered by the wish, furnished her longing heart with ample justification for the course pursued by her delinquent lover.

CHAPTER XII.

THE appointment of McClellan to the command of the "Grand Army" gave as universal satisfaction at the South as at the North, even his enemies feeling that, in the event of defeat, to know that they owed it to a soldier and a gentleman would be a salve to their wounds, and some compensation for the humiliation.

Once more the two armies lay before Richmond in ominous inactivity, only an occasional raid into each other's lines serving to keep the deadly ball in motion. Meanwhile, the Valley was the scene of some brilliant movements. The ubiquitous Jackson gained victories at the most unexpected points, and successfully eluding all pursuit, would appear again in most unwelcome manner. Scorning to be trammeled with quartermaster or commissary trains, he depended largely upon what was captured from the enemy.

So many brilliant achievements were well calculated to inspire the Confederate forces with a pardonable degree of vanity, while the outside world looked on with wonder and increasing admiration. On the other hand, preparations for the next advance on Richmond were now being carefully considered, and everything that science could suggest, or a well-filled treasury supply, was contributed to the one end in view.

Many of the citizens of Winchester and surrounding neighborhood had been obliged to abandon their homes, some having sought refuge in the Confederate capital, while others managed to keep just within the lines of the Confederate outposts. Many remained in the vain hope of protecting their homes from ruthless depredation, as first one army and then the other occupied the country. The old town of Winchester was the bone of contention in many a hard-fought battle, and the peaceful serenity

and well-bred calm which had once pervaded her streets seemed gone forever, while the measured tread of the sentry and roll of the martial drum became sadly familiar sounds in the ears of her citizens.

Busy months of preparation for the second attack on the Confederate capital brought the "Grand Army" to the late spring, when they once more took up their line of march in that direction. Formidable obstacles interposed themselves. General Johnston, by forced marches, reached Yorktown before them, to McClellan's infinite surprise, but afterward evacuating that place, retires slowly in the direction of Richmond, though now and then acting on the offensive, and offering battle to those in pursuit.

The Confederates did not stop their well-ordered retreat until safe within the trenches around the capital, while McClellan and the forces under him now felt sanguine of shortly capturing the city. At this juncture, the immortal Jackson, by some of his wonderful strategic movements in the Valley, diverted the attention of the Federal Government from the main object, and it soon became necessary to withdraw some of the troops from the attack on Richmond to send to the aid of those defeated and routed by that matchless leader at other points.

Johnston immediately seizes advantage of the opportunity thus afforded and attacks McClellan at Seven Pines, driving the forces under him for some distance and inflicting considerable loss, though being wounded himself. It is not my purpose to write a history of the war, however, except so far as to show the movements of those in whom we are interested.

Lee, who succeeded Johnston in command, resolved to follow up the victory he had gained, and in a little while made another attack on the troops under McClellan. Jackson, in an indirect way, had already afforded signal relief to the defensive forces around Richmond, but now the effort to repulse the enemy still further was made, with the hope that Jackson would come in person with his victorious veterans.

General Hills and Longstreet commanded the attack on the enemy, who had strongly intrenched themselves at Gaines' mill. The tide of battle had changed several times, both sides fighting bravely and losing heavily. McClellan, in order to reassure his waning confidence, sends out a reconnoitering party in charge of Colonel Appleton. They ride cautiously along through the treacherous swamps and thickly-wooded country which lies around them until beyond the range of the continuous volleys of musketry, though now and then a stray shell whistles past them.

Before riding very far, the rear guard of the detail discovers a party of gray-coats coming in on their flank. This discovery creates dismay, as a further advance, they fear, will encounter a larger body. To retrace their steps now, however, would be impossible, and there is no alternative but to meet them in battle. They wheel about, and soon a conflict ensues, grim and deadly.

Our friend Charlie Holmes, now a colonel, commands the advance guard of cavalry, and, though he sees at a glance that the Federals outnumber them two to one, he hesitates not a moment. He has been on the winning side too many times when the odds were twice as great.

Very soon he recognizes in the dashing officer commanding the opposing squadron his old rival, and for a moment the demon revenge whispers in his ear. His own face is so covered with beard that he feels no fears of recognition from Appleton, and, singling him from among the others, he rushes madly with drawn saber within arm's length, when Appleton, whose arm is raised to fire his pistol, suddenly falls forward with a cry of pain, being struck by a ball from the weapon of one of the men. The impulse in Holmes' breast is suddenly chilled. Could he strike a fallen foe, even though he be his deadliest enemy? His better self prevailed, and he jumped from his horse for an instant to assist the now helpless man. Seeing their leader thus unhorsed,

they soon surrendered to what indeed proved to be the advance of Jackson's army, who had come in time to save the day.

Without making himself known at all, Charlie had Appleton carried to the nearest hospital, and, as if to atone for the ignoble prompting which had for even so short a time possessed his breast, he took pains to have him treated with exceptional kindness and skillful care.

Appleton, on his part, little dreaming to whom he was indebted for this special attention, considered his wound, which proved a slight, though painful, one, as a piece of good fortune, favoring the long wished-for meeting with the woman whom he still fondly loved. Accordingly, as soon as he was able, he wrote to Pauline, telling her of his wound and the joyful prospect of once more beholding her. He waited in painful suspense for an answer to this letter, as he knew not what influences might have been operating against him during their long separation.

This letter never reached its destination, but Pauline received the following one from Charlie :

"I little thought, when I parted with you a few short months ago, that your parting injunction to 'forget you' would so soon be subjected to a serious test. Suffice it to say that, if I had obeyed it, the consequences to one, from whom you have doubtless heard ere this, would in all probability have proved fatal.

"In a moment when, least expecting it and all unsought, the opportunity for sweet revenge, at least, was offered me, the frailest thing interposed to save the object of it from instant death. It was what you had interdicted, the consolation of a 'memory,' sad though it might be. It served its purpose, and God grant that you may never be called on to endure the agony of 'forgetting.' CHARLIE."

CHAPTER XIII.

IN his flight from Winchester, Jonathan Wilder carried his son Jacob by easy stages to the nearest point on the railroad. No serious consequences resulting from this move, he concluded to go still further and seek an asylum for his deluded son in Washington City. Jacob was too weak for some time to fully comprehend the reason of this flight, his parents, however, telling him that battles would be fought around Winchester, which would make their cottage unsafe to live in longer.

Quietly landed at last, he began to recuperate rapidly, and, with returning health, his active brain began to fathom the motives which had actuated his parents in removing him from their former home. He realized that opposition in his then weak condition would effect nothing, so he wisely concluded to remain quiescent in their hands. His reviving energies were secretly directed to maturing a plan for returning to the South. The loss of his leg would, he knew, render him unfit for active service again, so he resolved to keep up a stout heart, and, like Mr. Micawber, "wait for something to turn up."

His father and mother flattered themselves that they were once more regaining their influence over him, and took pains to surround him with every comfort, and even luxury. Jacob saw that he was regarded by those who approached him as one who had been forced to fight against his wishes, and he resolved to keep up this appearance of martyrdom and make capital out of it. He was, accordingly, fitted up with the latest style of cork leg and given a subordinate position in a department of the Government. The subject of his rebel sweetheart was never broached by either of his parents, nor was his return to the South ever mentioned; but, as if by a tacit agreement, the new life was entered into, and they congratulated themselves pri-

vately upon achieving the long wished-for object at last. With poor Jacob, however, time hung heavily.

Several months had now elapsed since he received his wounds, and he had made but one effort to communicate with Jennie. His anxiety to hear from her once more was growing insupportable, as the news from the Valley convinced him that the people there had endured many privations. He was not even positive whether she had remained at home during the Federal occupation under Banks. The fear of compromising himself as well as her had prevented his writing, except the one time that has been mentioned, and receiving no answer he had concluded not to try it again.

In a mysterious and unexpected manner, he came one night into possession of an important paper, which had reference to a future policy of the Government under certain contingencies, and also disclosed the whereabouts of vast stores of arms and supplies. He quickly divined that this knowledge would be of incalculable value to the Government at Richmond, if he could only transmit it to them, and the more he thought of it, the more intent he became on carrying this important document to the commanding officer in the Valley. Since he could render no signal service to the cause he loved so well, he had been willing enough to save the Confederacy the expense of one ration, but now he felt the time had come when important aid could be given.

How to accomplish the journey, though, was a question not easy of solution. It was just after the battles around Richmond, and all strangers who desired to pass through the lines were regarded with suspicion; only those effecting a passage who were armed with unquestionable credentials, or protected by a "flag of truce." His only hope, it seemed, was to go in the guise of a Federal soldier, until he reached their out-posts, at least; but at the same time, he did not wish to lose his place in the office where he was employed, as he felt that in his maimed condition he could render more effective service there than in the South.

He had recently made the acquaintance of a Federal soldier, whose patriotism, though well enough for holiday purposes, was not proof against propositions, when backed by substantial considerations. He was convalescent in a hospital at Washington, and the fact of his being Jacob's height and build, and somewhat like him in general appearance, seemed to pave the way for an easy solution of the problem which was then agitating Jacob's brain, viz: As to how he should effect his trip to the Valley and back, without exciting suspicion.

Accordingly, after feeling his way cautiously with this new acquaintance, one Smith by name, he discovered that no deep, inflexible principle of self-immolation had operated to make him don "the blue," but that a *bonus* of $200 had been accepted as fitting compensation for the perilous position, from one even less imbued than himself with patriotic ardor. In other words, he had been enlisted in the honorable capacity of a substitute, and was on his way from home to join the command to which he had been assigned, when overtaken by the sickness which detained him in Washington, where Jacob was enabled to make his acquaintance.

After satisfying himself that he was safe in doing so, Jacob proposed that he (Smith) should take upon himself the discharge of his (Jacob's) duties while he should go to visit his sweetheart, who, he explained, lived near the place where Smith's command was then encamped, and for this reason it would be necessary for them to exchange clothes, as well as for Jacob to borrow his papers.

It seemed a very simple proposition to Smith, as well as one that would pay. Jacob was a fellow-soldier who had been unfortunate enough to lose a leg in the cause of the Union (Jacob never told him so, nor did he tell him to the contrary when he found that was Smith's belief), and he felt a sympathy for a poor fellow that wanted to see his sweetheart, even if she did live on debatable ground. He had one himself away out in

Michigan, and at this recollection, he thought he would have been satisfied with only half of what Jacob had offered as a consideration for the borrowed identity.

So far it seemed plain sailing; though Jacob knew that every foot of such a journey was fraught with peril, he did not, nevertheless, flinch from undertaking it. He told his parents that he had arranged to go and see Jennie, and if they made no opposition and kept quiet about it that he would return in a few days, but otherwise they would not see him again. Jacob's quiet determination, when he made the announcement, convinced them that opposition or remonstrance would be useless, so in this way he bought their silent acquiescence, for consent it could not be called.

Armed with Smith's passes he left the city that evening on the west-bound train, and found himself, a few hours later, in the vicinity of his old home. The Federals had occupied Winchester and the country surrounding for several months, and reporting at once to the officer in command of Smith's company, he begged leave to spend the night at the house of a well-known Union man, whom he claimed as a distant relative, which request, in consideration of his recent convalescence, was readily granted.

To Jacob's surprise and delight the thing seemed almost accomplished, and his heart beat high with hope, as he trod once more the old familiar streets. What could keep him now from his Jennie? He passed the little cottage and his once busy shop, both now closed and silent, though still standing. He could not get over ground fast enough, and, although he had taken the precaution to disguise himself, he noticed one or two lonely pedestrians who looked back after him as he passed, attracted, doubtless, by something familiar.

The waning twilight, though, proved a friendly ally, and he reached the shrine of his idol in safety. A stranger answered his knock, which again excited his fears as he asked:

"Is Miss Jennie Dwyer at home?" The woman gave him

an inquisitive look and said "she would see," leaving him standing in the open door-way.

Making a desperate effort, Jacob could hear subdued voices in an adjoining room and distinguished a little of what was said. It was Jennie's voice that presently sent a thrill through him as she said: "The impudent fellow, I don't receive Yankee visitors."

Presently the woman returning said: "Miss Jennie is at home but can not see you."

"Tell her," said Jacob, "that I bring her a message from a friend in Washington."

To this message she returned answer "that she would see him."

Accordingly, he was invited into the parlor to await her coming. A flood of memories rushed over him as he recognized his surroundings; everything in the room was consecrated by the halo of a presence which was inseparably connected with the spot. Presently her well-known footstep is heard and she enters the door. Expecting to see a stranger, she advances with hesitation, but at the first tones of his voice he is recognized, in spite of his false colors, and in an instant she is in his extended arms.

Allowing her to sob out her joy on his shoulder, he says nothing for several minutes, until she murmurs:

"What does it all mean, Jacob? I know you are not in the Yankee army, but why this uniform?"

"Jennie, my darling, I am occupying a very perilous position, as you may imagine," he answered, "so take every precaution at once to prevent any one knowing I am here, except, of course, your mother and father. Tell your friends that it is Mr. Smith, who knows Jacob in Washington, and brought you messages from him. I must be off to-morrow or I may be recognized."

"O, Jacob! Jacob! how could you run such risks, but I have been so unhappy at not hearing from you, and after the way your father and mother treated me I thought they would teach you to forget me," said Jennie.

"Forget you, indeed!" he exclaimed, "I hardly feel that I can ever forgive the old people for keeping you from me when I was so sick, for I know you only wanted their consent to be with me all the time."

Then ensued a long explanation of the reason he had remained in Washington.

"But, my little girl, don't be the less glad to see me when I tell you that I have another reason for coming to Winchester besides seeing you. I know you are as much interested in the success of the cause as I am, and I am going to trust you with a secret, and get your advice and assistance in an important matter," he continued, lowering his voice. "I have in my possession a paper which gives valuable information to the Confederates, and my object is to get to Jackson's headquarters with it as soon as possible."

Jennie listened with eager interest. "I know the Confederate pickets are not far from here," she said, "for the Yankees had a skirmish with them yesterday, and were driven in early in the day."

"Well, that is a good piece of news," said Jacob, "I can't have very far to go if they are so near."

"You surely won't wear that uniform?" asked Jennie.

"O, no; I want to leave this here and borrow a citizen's suit —that one of your brothers must have left at home—will you be afraid to keep it?" asked Jacob.

"Not I; and there is an old suit here of Tom's that will fit you, I expect, and I will rip a place in the lining and sew the paper in, so there will be no danger of their finding it, even if you should be searched," said Jennie, her interest growing in the enterprise.

"And another thing, Jennie, dear, to make my disguise more complete I must take off my cork leg and carry it along some way, but I thought I could borrow your father's crutches, as I will need them then," continued Jacob, "and now to get a con-

veyance to drive to Dr. D——'s,* as that must be near the outposts."

Jennie's father was a cripple from rheumatism, and being confined to his bed at this juncture, justified her in promising Jacob the use of his crutches, while Mrs. Dwyer, who had been called into the consultation, undertook to borrow a buggy, and Jennie and herself were to drive Jacob, concealed in it, to Dr. D——'s. It is true, the drive was attended with considerable danger, but they intended to avoid all sentinels, and in the event of being captured, Jacob intended to represent himself as trying to escape into the Confederacy without parole, and destroy the paper which would involve more serious consequences if found on him.

The next evening was appointed to make the attempt, and all was gotten in readiness with greater ease than they had anticipated. Jacob had undergone the transition from a full-fledged Yankee to a dismembered Confederate, and had donned the old suit of citizen's clothes provided by Mrs. Dwyer. He sat in the little parlor once more, Jennie by his side, assuring him in affectionate tones that his misfortune only made him dearer to her. They were forgetting all the exciting past, as well as the more perilous present, in the erection of fairy castles which should be realized as soon as the war was over, such as only youthful lovers, full of ardor, know how to build.

Presently, they were brought to a sense of their more practical surroundings by a loud knock at the street door. In an instant, Jennie was at the window, and, peeping between the curtains, presently exclaimed in tones of dismay:

"Great heavens, Jacob! they are Yankees—an officer and two men. What will you do? Come quick and hide."

"That would be the worst thing in the world, now, Jennie," he said, calmly. "I am all right. Ten to one they are looking for the Yankee that came here last night named Smith, but the

* The residence of Dr. Davis, on the outskirts of Winchester, was a favorite rendezvous for perplexed Confederates.

cork leg and uniform, they must be hidden by all means—run," he said, as another impatient knock was now heard

Quick as thought Jennie sped from the room; meeting her mother on the stairway, she told her hurriedly of the situation.

"Keep them down stairs as long as you can while I hide the uniform and cork leg," she whispered, and hurried on.

Her fertile brain did not wait long, but gathering together all the suspicious articles she rushed into her father's room.

"Father, the Yankees are here, please let me put these under your head quick," she said, breathlessly, and had soon arranged them as another pillow under her father's head, while he quickly assumed the air and attitude of one in intense suffering.

Mrs. Dwyer meanwhile met the intruders at the door.

"Madam," said the officer, "I have an order for the arrest of a United States soldier that came here last night."

Mrs. Dwyer looked much surprised. "A United States soldier that came here last night?" she repeated, deliberately.

"Yes, and I have no time to waste," said he, pushing rudely past her.

"Let me see your order, I think there must be some mistake," she said, calmly. "United States soldiers don't come here."

"There it is, and be quick about it; men, search the house at once," continued the officer.

"There is no necessity to search; I'll show you through the house," answered Mrs. Dwyer, and putting a brave face on the matter, opened the parlor door first, where Jacob sat seemingly absorbed in a book.

The men peered in maliciously as if they had found the object of their search.

"What are you doing here, fellow?" asked the officer, going rudely up to him.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Jacob, looking up surprised, and reaching for his crutch in a helpless sort of way.

"Not much of anything, sir, I am afraid there's not much that I'll ever be fit for again."

"How long have you been here?" continued the officer.

"Pretty much all my life, except a little while that I took to loose this leg," he answered, politely.

"O, yes, you are a Reb," said one of the men.

"That is what you fellows call it, I believe," said Jacob, good naturedly.

"I suppose, of course, you have been paroled," asked the officer.

"This will answer your question," said Jacob, handing him his old parole, with an easy air which was quite calculated to disarm suspicion. The officer looked at it carefully, and turning it over seemed to regard it with distrust.

"O, it's all right," said Jacob, with inward fear that all might be wrong; "and even if it wasn't what harm can a poor fellow do that has but one leg?"

"I think, myself, you are wasting time," said one of the men, in an undertone. "The fellow we are looking for will have time to leave town if you parley with this man much longer."

They now continued their search through the house, leaving no place undisturbed where a man could possibly hide.

Upon reaching the second floor they opened the door of the sick man's room, and Jennie looked up in well-feigned amazement, just as if she hadn't been listening outside all the time, to the result of the search below stairs. She raised her hand as if to impose quiet, and Mrs. Dwyer explained that her husband was an invalid, and unable to stand any excitement.

"D—n the invalid," said one of the men, for they were now certain that they had the man for whom they were looking, and insisted upon rousing him up and making an examination. Poor Jennie's heart was in her throat, but she betrayed no symptom of fear, as they stood around the bed, and a very short time seemed to convince them that the grey hairs of the old man were real

and his sickness not feigned. Disgusted with their failure, they soon left the house, to the infinite relief of the inmates.

Smith not having returned to camp during the day, as he had led his superior officer to suppose that he would do, the officer and two men were sent in quest of him. The house of the Union man had been first searched, and as a soldier had been seen to enter the Dwyer's, it was concluded to search there also, resulting, however, in the manner described, and placing Jacob's enterprise on a different footing.

Mrs Dwyer, Jennie, and Jacob met once more in earnest consultation.

"It will never do for you to attempt to go South now, Jacob," said Mrs. Dwyer, "they have found out that you are here, and they will keep a strict watch over all your actions, you may depend."

"I have been thinking that myself," returned Jacob; "but that paper ought to be in old Jack's hands in the next few days, to do any good, and I feel tempted to risk it. If I had only my own leg back again I'd do it, but this manufactured thing, though much better than none, can't be depended on for much service."

"I believe I could flank the pickets," said Jennie, with sudden inspiration, "and get that paper to Jackson. It would be much less of a risk for me than for you, Jacob, dear."

"You brave little heart," said Jacob, with admiration, "how in the world could you manage it?"

"I don't know exactly how, but I wouldn't be afraid to try, in fact, I should like it," said Jennie, "and the more I think of it the more impossible it seems for you to undertake it."

After a long discussion it was finally decided best for Jacob to return to Washington next day, and for Jennie to undertake the delivery of the all-important paper.

Bidding Jennie and her parents good-bye, and donning again his cork leg and uniform, Jacob set out under cover of the friendly twilight and through the back premises, once more for

camp. He went at once to the officer in command, who expressed great surprise at seeing him, but Jacob treated the matter so lightly that it quite disarmed his rising wrath. Asking for a private interview with the worthy official he explained that he was in the employ of the Government at Washington now, but that previous to a very bad wound which he had received in another branch of the service, he had been stationed near Winchester, where he had fallen a victim to the fascinations of a young lady of the place. Failing to get leave to make this visit in his own name, he had resorted to the ruse of borrowing that of his friend Smith, who he begged would not be made to suffer for his fault.

The explanation proved satisfactory and he was allowed to return to Washington, with only an admonition not to repeat the offense.

CHAPTER XIV.

JENNIE'S one idea now was to put the all-important document into General Jackson's hands. She had reason to suppose that the Federal outposts were not over two miles from town, and she laid her plans accordingly.

Among the few comforts which they had still retained was a cow, which was Jennie's special care, since they no longer had a servant. She drove it to and from pasture and attended to it exclusively herself, and although she was frequently saved the trouble of milking it, by the soldiers in the neighborhood, yet she did occasionally get a small share, and there was always the hope, at least, of finding more. Being her invalid father's main dependence, she gladly took all the pains she could to secure it for him.

She now conceived the idea of driving her cow to a field beyond the picket lines. Her plans were not very well defined, but wonderful possibilities arose in her mind if she could once find herself beyond the pickets. Accordingly, she went boldly along the road next morning, carolling merrily, as she went, as if her one object in life was to find fresh fields for her bovine companion. Reaching the sentinel, she nodded and smiled, and was passing on without so much as "Will you allow me?" or "by your leave," when he halted her.

"My pretty miss, you can't git by here without a pass, I'm sorry to tell ye."

"A pass," said Jennie, in well-feigned astonishment, "a pass to carry my cow to pasture, it is just yonder," pointing to an inclosure just beyond.

"Them's my orders, miss, and I have to obey 'em," said the soldier.

"And a pretty order it is," she returned; "the poor old cow

is nearly starved to death in town, and my poor sick father will starve to death, too, if he can't get any milk. It is a hard case, I declare," and she stood as if undetermined.

"Them's the instructions, I am sorry to say; if nobody but me had the say I'd let you go by," answered the sentinel.

Jennie felt that she had gained a little and quickly followed it up.

"Can't you just watch me while I put old Bess in the gate yonder, I won't be a minute, and she'll get such a nice dinner, won't you let me? I know you will," and giving a beseeching look, she started off again.

"I'll let you by this once, but you musn't tell on me," said the kind-hearted fellow; "and you must see the general and get a pass from him, so you won't have any more trouble."

Jennie, bowing her thanks, passed on, and putting her cow in one of the few remaining enclosures, soon came tripping back, smiling gratefully as she passed.

"One step taken," she thought, complacently, "in carrying out my project, but maybe it would be best to get a pass from the general, as the man suggested." So, after consulting with her mother, she concluded to try, at least, and next morning marched boldly to his headquarters.

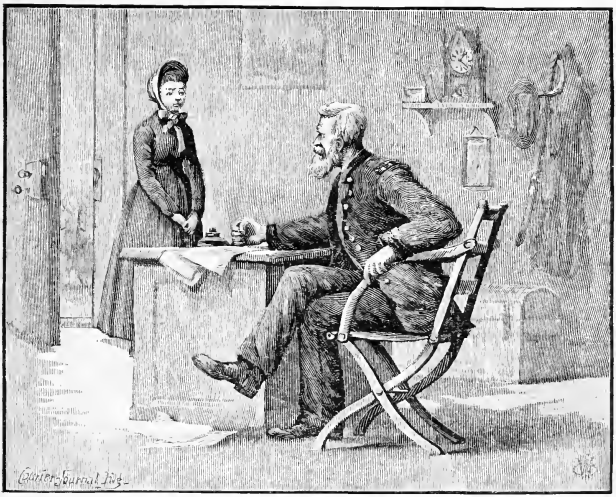
Walking in, without waiting to be announced, she said, as if asking a very small favor:

"General, can I get a pass to drive my cow back and forth to a field just outside your lines?"

"Outside my lines," he exclaimed, in a loud tone of voice; "why, girl, are you crazy? *Nothing* can go outside my lines from here. Don't you know the rebels are just a short distance beyond my pickets?"

"I didn't know it, general," she replied, "but I am not afraid of them, I don't believe they would hurt me."

"No, I guess not," he answered, roughly, "you are one of the d—d lot yourself."



"I TELL YOU, GIRL, YOU CAN NOT HAVE A PASS; THIS UNION MUST BE PRESERVED!"

"But, general," she urged, not seeming to notice his rude speech, "I have a sick father who is entirely dependent on the little milk we get, and we have nothing at home to feed the old cow. Unless I drive her up the road, where she can get a little grass, I don't know what he will eat."

"I tell you, girl, you can not have a pass; this Union *must* be preserved," said he, striking the table angrily.

*"If its salvation depends upon starving a poor old cow it must be far gone, indeed," said Jennie, indignantly, and without further effort, left his presence.

"I'll take that cow to pasture without a pass, *I will*," she said to herself, as she went home again. "I'll bribe the pickets, I know I can do that."

* A school-girl of Winchester, Miss Arnold, made this speech to General Milroy under somewhat similar circumstances.

"Old fool! he is nearer the truth than he thinks, though," and she laughed to herself.

Next morning early, Jennie started off in high hope; she had had no trouble in the evening when she went to bring her cow home, and that fact encouraged her. This time she carried a small basket, hoping to meet with the same success In order to ensure it, however, she had taken some of her mother's nicest pies, which, she knew by sad experience, were dear to every Yankee heart. With these she hoped to purchase her passage by the picket. As she approached the post she discovered to her dismay that the sentry was not the same one with whom she had made such headway the previous morning, but a gruff-looking old fellow with a foreign air. Her heart sank within her, though she attempted to pass on, when rudely brought to a halt.

"Ish you got von leef?" he said, with unmistakable German accent.

"O, no," said Jennie, "I go by here to drive my cow, that's the gate yonder," pointing up the road. "I don't need a pass for that," she said, confidently.

"Ish you von sesesh or Union?" he continued.

"Look at me and see if you can't guess," said Jennie, smiling

"I beleefs you be von reb," he answered, inclined to smile himself.

"You have guessed right," said Jennie.

"Vell, I beleefs I vill leafs you get py. Fen dey say dey pe Unions I knowsh it pe von tam lie, zo I'll leafs you go for dellin de drufe."

"I thank you so much," said Jennie, "and here is a nice pie for letting me pass, I want to empty my basket anyhow, as I am going to gather some 'greens' for our dinner," and she soon passed on, driving the cow before her.

At last in the lot, she went from one spot to another, gathering her "greens," though keeping one eye, all the while, carefully on the picket-post; a little rise in the ground soon obscured

her from view, and now, she thought, was her chance. Being familiar with the neighborhood, she sped over the ground as if endowed with wings, taking great care, however, to keep out of sight. After going about a mile, she came to the house of a family in whom she knew she could confide, and giving them a general idea of her errand, she was soon furnished with a horse and directed to the nearest Confederate post. On reaching it, she found our old friend John Randolph in charge, and took a private opportunity to give him the paper, which was carefully concealed on her person. He saw at a glance the importance of it, and seemed amazed that she should have it in her possession.

Fearing to compromise Jacob, she asked to be excused from telling how she came by it, but begged that it might be sent at once to Jackson's headquarters.

"I will engage to put it in his hands myself," said Randolph.

"I feel sure that I can trust my errand in your hands now," said Jennie, "and must hurry back at once."

"Why, girl, do you know the risk you run?" asked he.

"I should think I did," she answered, laughing, "but am only too glad to be of some use."

John looked at her with undisguised admiration.

"Won't you remain outside and go in with the army?" he asked; "for, from the information contained in this paper, I think it will not be very long before we drive the Yankees over the Potomac."

"God grant that it may be so," she ejaculated, "but if I am missed the consequences may be serious, so I must hasten back."

Mounting her horse again, she said "good bye," and retraced her steps as rapidly as she had come. When she reached the field again the day was nearly spent, and driving her cow before her, she fervently hoped that her failure to return in the morning had not been noticed. Fortune favored her again, for just as she got in sight of the picket she saw a relief take the post, and she marched by as quietly as if she had not been gone all day.

CHAPTER XV.

PAULINE did not know, until the receipt of Charlie's letter, that Appleton was a prisoner and wounded. *His* letter containing the information having failed to reach her, Charlie's magnanimity completely overpowered her.

"Would that I had never met him," she said to herself, "or that the other had never lured me to the fatal confession."

"But I do love Edward Appleton," she continued, as if trying to reassure herself, "and must I give him up, forsooth, because he dares to fight for what he has been brought up to consider the right? I will not. I honor him for resisting the temptation to desert his cause—for I know he loves me. To think, too, that he is wounded and may be very near me, and I am denied the privilege of ministering to his comfort; why, oh why, has fate dealt so cruelly with me?"

Appleton, she supposed, was aware of her father's residence in Richmond, and she thought he would seek her out as soon as he was able, but as the weeks passed by, and she heard nothing more from him, she was almost distracted with anxiety and uncertainty.

Her speculations were at last brought to an end, one morning, by the entrance of her maid, bringing her a card upon which was written, "Colonel Edward Appleton, United States Army."

The suddenness of the announcement, after expecting him so long, completely threw her off her guard, and she exclaimed:

"Heavens! Sarah, can he have called here in his United States uniform?" but the girl, fortunately, had gotten out of the room, though she now called her back again.

"Sarah, how is the gentleman dressed that is in the parlor?"

"Don't know 'zactly how he dressed, Miss P'line, but he look mighty nice," she answered, grinning.

"Well, tell me—that is," stammered Pauline," I mean, has he got on soldier clothes?"

"Law, no, Miss, he ain't no sojer at all, for I didn't see no brass buttons nor nothin'. He mighty pretty, too, Miss P'line."

"Very well, Sarah," she said, in a relieved tone, "tell him I will be down very soon— But wait a minute; come back; what makes you in such a hurry?" continued Pauline, impatiently. "Are you sure that mamma said she could not be back till dinner?"

"Yes, indeed, she did. But, Miss P'line, what de matter wid you? You fust looks red, an' den white. I never seed you do so before," said Sarah, anxiously.

"There is nothing at all the matter, Sarah, you are crazy. Go along now, and, remember, you are to excuse me if any one else calls this morning."

"B'lieve my soul Miss P'line fixin' to run away wid dat ar man in de parlor. *I's* gwine to watch her, and she needn't think she gwine to do it, nuther, ef her maw is away. *I* ain't tended long on her, all dese here yeahs, fur her to come to no sich eend," and Sarah shook her head ominously, as she descended the steps.

But, with her heart in such a flutter, how could she dress? Pauline had never before undertaken to engineer so decided a piece of deception, and she found herself somewhat at a loss to fix upon the ways and means necessary to accomplish it. Heretofore, she had simply avoided mentioning Appleton's name, had had no correspondence with him, nor entered into any formal engagement. There had been nothing to conceal, except her own feelings in the matter, but now the affair took on a different aspect altogether.

It would certainly be necessary to conceal his visit from her

parents. She did not like to think what the consequences might be, if her father discovered his presence in the house, on such an errand, and yet the word "conceal" had a horrible meaning in such a connection.

Meanwhile, Appleton was impatiently waiting for the advent in the parlor, having taken great pains to make himself look as much as possible as he did the last time Pauline had seen him. All the color had receded from her face as she paused at the threshold of the door, trying her best to swallow the lump which would keep rising in her throat, and quiet the violent thumping of her heart against her bodice.

Resolutely summoning all her courage, she finally opened the door.

The anxious eyes that met hers seemed to penetrate to the innermost recesses of her soul.

"Why, Pauline," he said, shyly advancing to meet her, "why have you prolonged the agony in this way? I feared you would not see me at all. Can you have forgotten me, indeed?"

"No! oh no," she whispered, "but it seems so strange."

"It is only strange that we see our duty in such different lights, darling! I sometimes fear that your love for me is not what I hoped, or you would give up your prejudices for my sake."

"You can never know all the anxious moments I have spent when the news of battles would come; to hear nothing from you has almost maddened me at times."

"And have you been anxious about me? While I have been tortured with countless doubts and fears lest my absence would prove fatal to my hopes, and do you know," he continued, earnestly, "that I am bent now on carrying you back with me as my wife? Will you not go? Why wait indefinitely? Pauline, I tell you the South must give up this struggle before long. It distresses me beyond measure to see her noble sons slain as they are, and know how helpless it is."

"I am sure they win all the battles, anyhow," said Pauline with spirit, "and eventually must succeed."

"Ah! but, darling, that is because of her advantage in position, and from what source can she draw recruits and supplies after awhile, when her own have become exhausted, as they must be in time. While, on the other hand, with an inexhaustible treasury, the United States can, and does, even now, recruit its armies from every nationality of Europe. What can there be to hope for in a few years at most? Won't you be convinced, and go with me now? I would so gladly spare you the privations and suffering which inevitably await the people of the South, if this war is continued much longer."

"Why, on the other hand," she said, presently, "can you not be persuaded to make my cause your cause? You must be convinced by this time that this is no war to preserve the Union, but one to liberate the negro, and I know you are not an Abolitionist."

"Would you have me become a deserter?" he asked, feelingly.

"I really think," answered Pauline, "that if one becomes convinced that he has been misled as to the merits of a cause which he has espoused, it becomes his duty to desert it and repair, as far as he can, the injury he has done."

"What a clever lawyer you would make," said Appleton, smiling, "but why do you suppose I have been misled? I still believe the preservation of the Union is the animating spirit of the war, though I admit that the question of freeing the negro is gaining ground every day. When it is made the object, though, I shall unhesitatingly resign."

"And come South," added Pauline.

"I didn't say that," he answered, laughing. "But let me propose a compromise—another compromise I should say—for do you remember the one I proposed in the early part of our acquaintance at Belmont? I shall never forget how charmingly

you received it; it was then, I think, that I made an unconditional surrender, instead of yielding a point."

"I'll venture to say, that you have never done that in your life," answered Pauline. "I remember the circumstance well; you quietly pocketed both cockades, and had your own way as coolly as if you had complied with my terms. You see I have a good memory, too," she added, laughing.

"But listen to what I propose, now, and don't let us waste any more time on the affairs of the nation. Give up all your prejudices for my sake, and go home with me as my wife, will you not, dearest Pauline?"

"What is principle in a man, then, is but prejudice in a woman, I suppose," she answered, "but you ask what I can not do—it would be impossible."

"It is as I feared, you do not love me; I will even resign my commission to prove how earnest I am," he continued, pleadingly; "then will you go?"

"O, do not tempt me; you know not what you ask. I could not leave my father and mother, and the dear boys so constantly exposed to danger," and another face, unbidden, rose before her mind's eye, whose gaze was mournfully fixed on the word, "forget," which seemed traced in burning letters above it; "do not ask me, I can not," she repeated with energy. "In the first place, no one knows of the—the—well, the understanding between us, except Belle Harvey," and her face colored as she suddenly recalled one other, who also knew it.

"Why, Pauline," he asked, reproachfully, "is it only an understanding?"

"Well, you know it could not be anything else, without the consent of my parents, which I hope to gain in the future, but now it would be even worse than useless to ask it."

"And you do not love me enough to marry me without their consent?" whispered he, boldly.

"I have kept your place sacred in my heart," she answered,

with a sad smile, "and will yield it to no other; but to ask me to leave my parents without their consent and blessing, I could not," she faltered.

"It is as I feared," he answered, hopelessly; "you did not know your own mind when you bid me hope."

"You do me injustice," she said. "I do mean all that I have said, but," she added, nervously, "you must go now; it is near the hour for my mother's return. Forgive me that I can not ask you to remain. It grieves me inexpressibly, but I know it would end in our absolute separation."

"When may I come again?" he asked, "or, will you drive with me to-morrow afternoon?"

"Yes, I will drive with you," said Pauline, in a relieved tone, "but do not call here. I'll meet you somewhere else; let me see, at the corner of —— streets. I will be there at 3:00 o'clock, punctually; indeed, you *must* go now!" she added, as the sound of an opening door reached her ear.

Bidding her good-bye, at last, he was soon out of the house, and Pauline had retired to her own room once more.

She found Sarah, busying herself around, though there seemed nothing special to be done, while ever and anon she cast furtive glances at Pauline, who, picking up a book, soon seemed to be reading.

"Miss P'line," she ventured, presently, "whar dat man come from what jes' lef? *I* never seed him afore, en how come it he didn't have no military on, nuther? I's been studyin' about it, en I's shore I never laid dese here eyes on him afore; whar *did* he come from, honey?" she asked, standing before her mistress in an inquisitorial attitude.

Not knowing exactly what to answer at first, Pauline hesitated some minutes.

"He is a gentlemen I met some time ago, Sarah, but don't annoy me with questions, now, I wish to read."

"Honey," said Sarah, squaring herself immediately in front

of Pauline, "dey is somethin' wrong 'bout dat er man, fur all he look so purty, en talk so nice; you bettah bewar' uv him; if he is all right, what you keer if your maw do cum home; you bettah listen to Sary, and take her device, shose you bawn, chile!" and with this parting advice she left her mistress to her own thoughts, which, after all, were not as comforting as they might have been. Had she felt the exquisite pleasure she had anticipated in again beholding the face of the man she loved? "If I could only see him openly," she argued, "and without this oppressing consciousness of how opposed my family would be, it would be different."

She did, indeed, feel guilty as she stole off next evening at the appointed hour, to keep the tryst she had made with her lover, and had scarcely reached the point of rendezvous when Appleton appeared with a carriage. Getting hurriedly into it, they were soon whirled away beyond the city limits and out an unfrequented road, which Pauline had selected because of the improbability of meeting with any of her acquaintances.

Appleton soon renewed the importunities of the previous day.

"Indeed, Pauline, I will take no refusal, you must go with me. I will make the acquaintance of your father and mother, if you will allow me, and ask their consent. I will even agree to leave the United States, as well as the army, and take you to Europe. If they will not then be persuaded to forego their prejudices, why, if you really love me you will marry me without, dearest Pauline," he said, tenderly.

But she didn't answer, and he presently continued:

"See how willing I am to resign all my ambitious dreams and yield all my prejudices. You need not stay in the North longer than necessary to take passage for England or wherever else it would suit your pleasure, and we will remain abroad until this terrible war shall have ceased. There, revelling in the love-light of your eyes, will I hope to find all the happiness that mortal could ask," continued Appleton, passionately.

"The picture is alluring, do not tempt me," she whispered, softly.

Thus encouraged, he continued with renewed eloquence:

"Together we will visit historic spots and classic ruins, and roaming 'neath the sunny skies of Italy we will forget the wicked war that is desolating our own fair land; say, darling, will not my love suffice for all that you resign?"

"Could I, think you, forget the sad history that is daily weaving itself around the familiar spots in my own home?" she asked, recalled to herself once more, "and can Italian skies be fairer or brighter than those in my own sunny South? Indeed, I can not leave her in her woe. You must not put my love to such a test. Wait till the war is over."

"Ah, Pauline," he said, in disappointed tones, "you do not love me or it would be no sacrifice to you to give up *all* for my sake."

They drove along in silence for a short distance, when Pauline, who had congratulated herself upon meeting no one that she had ever seen before, was startled from her composure by the familiar appearance of a horseman who had just appeared in view on the brow of a hill before them. His outline was quite distinct against the background of the afternoon sky, and she further saw that the rider had but one arm. The attention of both was now riveted upon the approaching figure, as a rabbit bounded over the low fence just in front of his horse and caused it to rear and plunge in a frantic manner. Being totally unable to check his wild leaps with his one hand, the rider was soon unseated and thrown violently against a rock by the roadside. The snorting steed, relieved of its weight, now rushed wildly past, and nothing remained for our friends but to drive to the relief of the unfortunate man.

To add to Pauline's horror, she discovered that the object of their care was no other than Major Hughes, who had been introduced to her by Charlie, at Mr. Davis' inaugural levee, and

whom she had met several times since. There seemed no alternative but to take him in the carriage with them, so after bathing his head with water, and restoring him to consciousness again, he was sufficiently revived to recognize Pauline, who introduced Appleton as an acquaintance she had made before the war.

Upon reaching the outskirts of the city Pauline found an excuse for stopping at a house they passed, and Appleton drove Hughes to his hotel, but the conversation between them (so adroitly did Appleton manage it) failed to satisfy Hughes that he had met, in this gentleman, the Yankee lover accredited to Pauline, although his suspicions were aroused. The fact of his being in a suit of citizen's clothes being the strongest argument in support thereof.

Appleton, on his part, was not in the best of humors at having to part so unceremoniously with Pauline, nor was his annoyance lessened upon reaching his hotel, to find letters which would necessitate his speedy return North.

The fact of McClellan having been superseded soon after the battle of Gaines' Mill made him quite willing to remain in the South, but now, news came, that he was to be reinstated and a special arrangement had been made, whereby an officer of equal rank was to be returned in exchange for Appleton. Under ordinary circumstances he would have been overjoyed, though allowed unusual liberties under his parole, through the intervention of an old classmate high in authority, to whom Appleton also gave his individual parole not to abuse the generous privileges accorded him.

But one day intervened before the time appointed for his departure, and he was quite distracted to know how he should compass another interview with Pauline, as he still hoped to persuade her to go with him. In a fit of desperation he decided to go boldly to the house again. He found her at home and again plead his suit with despairing eloquence.

"I will resign my commission at once, and come back for

you, if you will promise," he said, after convincing himself that she would not go with him, "though I fear there will be little use," he continued, hopelessly. "I would give up all for you, and yet you will make no sacrifice for me."

"You have no right to say that; you can never know how much I have already given up for you;" and she shuddered at a recollection which haunted her. "This much I will promise, however, that as soon as I hear you have resigned, I will tell my father and mother. and, if they consent, I will comply with your request."

"Dearest Pauline," he exclaimed, passionately, "do not disappoint me. I go from you, sustained by that promise alone, though only half-satisfactory, qualified as it is." Soon bidding her farewell, he left her presence, and the day following left Richmond by flag of truce.

CHAPTER XVI.

"WHO was your visitor this morning, my dear?" said Mrs. Rhett to Pauline, at dinner. "Sarah tells me that you were kept indoors most of the morning."

"He is a gentleman that I met at Belmont, mamma, when I was visiting Belle Harvey, you remember," answered Pauline, with considerable embarrassment, which, fortunately, was unobserved, for just at that moment a visitor, who was dining with them, looking around inquisitively, arrested Mrs. Rhett's attention.

"What will you have, Mr. Barksdale?"

"The curry, madam, if you please." answered the old gentleman.

And directing the servant to hand it to him, she turned again to Pauline, who had by this time somewhat recovered from her confusion.

"It is a great pity that you should have been kept indoors on such a lovely day, but I suppose an acquaintance from Winchester, that heaven on earth, in your eyes. was a welcome intrusion."

"Yes, indeed! I shall always regard my visit there as one of the brightest spots in my life," continued Pauline, feelingly.

"Bless my soul! My dear young lady, to hear you talk, one would think the world had used you badly. This curry is indeed an addition to my soup," continued Mr. Barksdale, parenthetically, "but what does she mean by talking so?"

"You misunderstood me entirely, Mr. Barksdale; to appreciate my remark, you should visit Winchester yourself," answered Pauline, a little impatiently.

"You are right, young lady. It is in truth a noble old place. Didn't I have a son wounded at the battle of Kernstown, and

they carried him to Winchester, to the house of perfect strangers, who treated him like a son of the family? You are right to say it is remembered by all who ever visit there. But try the curry, my dear, it will brighten you up," continued the old gentleman.

Pauline was so relieved at the turn the conversation had taken that she even agreed to try the curry, which was a condiment she had never relished before; and Mr. Barksdale turned again to Mr. Rhett.

"As you were remarking awhile ago, Mr. Rhett, I have fears myself that our invasion will be carried on on too high-toned a scale; we should fight the devil with fire, sir; fight him with fire; that is the proper policy, and it is a great pity that it has been deferred so long."

"I am very much afraid that Jackson will not be allowed to have his own way; he is the man for the times. Lee does not dare enough; he is too mild for the stuff he has to deal with," answered Mr. Rhett.

"It won't do, indeed, to handle our enemy with gloved hands any longer," returned Mr. Barksdale, "we have practiced that thing too long, now. West Point tactics do well enough for peace times, but the present emergency calls for an energetic application of *lex talonis*," and the little man brought his clenched fist down on the table with such force as to make the dishes rattle.

"I shall await with great anxiety the development of this policy," continued Mr. Rhett. "I urged it earnestly more than a year ago. It would, in my opinion, have changed the whole face of affairs. We should have subsisted upon the enemy instead of their laying such heavy tribute upon us."

"That is the idea, exactly, my friend (I will take just one more spoonful, Mrs. Rhett, it is really delicious, and this is the Dixie pudding, eh?)," interjected Mr. Barksdale; then continuing, "if it had been inaugurated earlier I don't doubt at all but by this time we should have been dictating our own terms to the usurpers at Washington."

"We would at least be in a better condition to make terms when the time comes," suggested Mr Rhett.

"Probably I *should* accept your amendment; maybe I *am* a little too fast," and turning again to Mrs. Rhett: "It is made of sorghum, is it; well, really, I must get you to give me the receipt for it; my wife would soon learn how to manufacture it, I am sure. What are the other ingredients, madam?"

"It is very simple," answered Mrs. Rhett, laughing, "equal portions of Indian meal and dried apples, mixed with sorghum, and boiled for several hours."

"That does sound very simple; I can remember that, I think, with little trouble," said he.

"But the sauce, Mr. Barksdale," continued Mrs. Rhett, "which is indispensable, and without which our pudding would be a dose, indeed, is *patriotism*."

"I am not altogether prepared to admit that, madam, not at all prepared to admit that," he answered. "'Tis true, the name attracted me first, but even now that I know the ingredients, I think it quite a toothsome dish, quite a toothsome dish, madam, and I should not be at all surprised, Mr. Rhett, if we hear of a battle before long, the result of which will doubtless decide the campaign.

"Maybe," he continued, turning to Pauline again, for he seemed to think it incumbent on him to entertain the entire family at the same time, and all the time; "it is the fears of Yankee bullets that make you so quiet to-day, Miss Pauline, eh? Never mind, it won't be long, now, before we clean 'em out, and then you can welcome your soldier lover back again."

His raillery, however, did not have the effect of making Pauline more cheerful, and soon, begging to be excused, she left the table and sought the quiet of her own room. She felt sure that her mother would ask her more of her visitor of the morning, and how she should answer, without letting her know the state of affairs between Appleton and herself, she could not determine.

Indeed, she had almost made up her mind to a full confession as soon as her mother should give her the opportunity. Her pent-up heart needed some relief, and she was beginning to feel the bad effects of the want of confidence she had shown toward her parents at the outset, and acknowledged now, when too late, that her surest safeguard would have been their judgment in the beginning.

CHAPTER XVII.

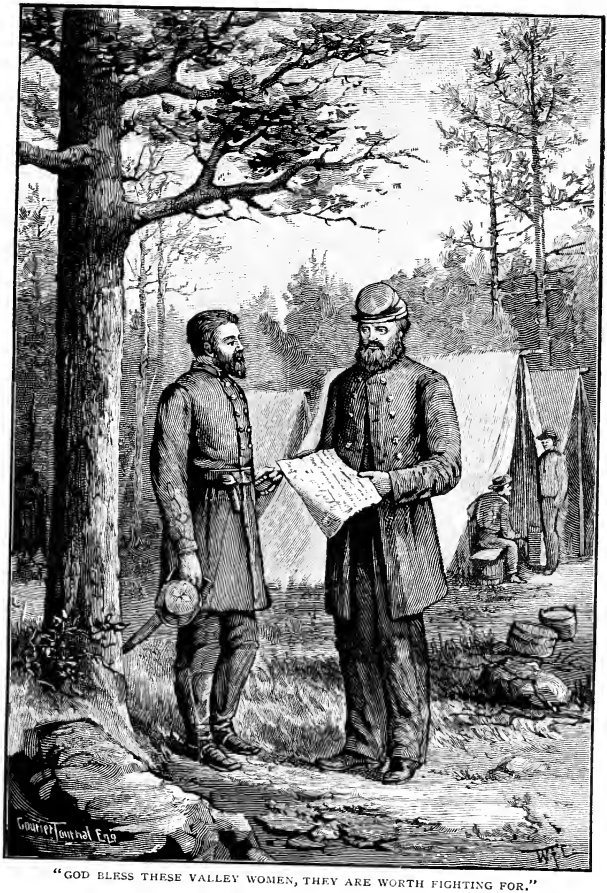
THE nature of the paper which Jennie had placed in Randolph's hands convinced him that delay in delivering it would be dangerous, so he applied to be detailed for special duty, and went off, post haste, to Jackson's headquarters. Riding hard and fast, he succeeded in reaching there soon after sunrise the next day, and was ushered without ceremony into Jackson's presence. He found him, assembled with his staff, at breakfast, near the door of his tent, it being a sultry morning in early September.

Room was soon made, and Randolph invited to a seat, not, however, until he had delivered the paper to Jackson, who scanned it eagerly, but without comment.

"If you could have made it convenient to have visited us a fortnight ago, Randolph," said Major Davis, jocularly, "we would have entertained you royally, as about that time, we were reveling in the good things captured at Bristow's—all sorts of canned things—besides a liberal supply of 'store' coffee and sugar, but the general, there, always makes us divide even, so the good things don't last long in such a hungry crowd. Will you take your decoction of parched wheat with 'long sweetnin'' or 'straight?'" he continued, as he poured out a cup of the beverage for Randolph.

"I will indulge in the luxury of 'long sweetnin'' by all means," answered Randolph, laughing.

"If I could imagine where he found the means I would declare that our cook had been on another spree last night," continued Major Davis, in a low tone; "the rascal has forgotten the 'dip' as he calls our substitute for butter, but try a slice of his bacon, 'a la fry,' you have no idea what a really French flavor it has," and with an air which nothing less complicated than



"GOD BLESS THESE VALLEY WOMEN, THEY ARE WORTH FIGHTING FOR."

"boned turkey" would warrant, he placed upon Randolph's tin plate a huge slice of fat bacon.

"No apology is necessary, I assure you, major," said Randolph, "I bring with me a sauce that would season much plainer food."

Jackson now folded the paper with which he had been engrossed, and, catching Randolph's last remark, said, good humoredly:

"I hope you youngsters are not laughing at the wholesome fare, which it pleases the good Lord to provide for us, though if you really pine for better, I think there is a likelihood we shall have it soon."

After breakfast he called Randolph aside.

"Where in the world, Randolph, did you get that paper?"

"It was brought to me yesterday by a young girl, who had 'run the blockade,' evidently, from Winchester, and who made me promise to put it in your hands without delay; she refused, however, to disclose how she came by it," answered Randolph.

"It must be authentic," said Jackson, closely examining it again; "it bears unmistakable evidences of the fact. God bless these Valley women, they are worth fighting for,"* he exclaimed, fervently.

"They are, indeed," rejoined Randolph, with equal warmth.

"A rich prize awaits us, and we must strike while the iron is hot," said Jackson.

The order was soon issued, now, for a forward movement of the entire army. Though the series of brilliant victories through which the Southern armies had just passed would have warranted their resting on their laurels for awhile, yet flushed with their recent success, no less than a desire to replenish exhausted resources, they were more than willing to take advantage of the information received and grasp, while within their power, the rich harvest that was waiting to be reaped. Hence, the onward movement.

* General Jackson's own words after the battle of Kernstown.

General Pope, on the other hand, defeated and dismayed, was rapidly withdrawing his forces north of the Potomac. One large body yet remained on the south side and these were stationed at Harper's Ferry, guarding the immense stores that were deposited there by the Government. With this knowledge in his possession, Jackson hastened forward, taking every advantage of the demoralization occasioned by Pope's recent defeat.

McClellan is once more reinstated and sent to check the dreaded advance. The forces under Lee had now crossed the Potomac and "carrying the war into Africa," caused the abandonment, for awhile, of the attempt to capture Richmond.

Hill now intercepts the Federals and engages them in a battle at Boonsboro Gap. Jackson, meanwhile, pushed rapidly on toward Harper's Ferry, which, after a short, determined attack on his part, is surrendered with the entire garrison of twelve thousand men, besides vast stores of arms, ammunition, and military supplies of every kind.

And now, again, as if not sated with the terrific carnival of blood just passed, the beautiful valley of Antietam is made the scene of another battle, the Federals numbering two to one of the Confederates.

The hills resound throughout the entire day with the dreadful thunder of artillery and the sickening rattle of the smaller arms. The fair face of nature is once more drenched with the life-blood of the heroes, who so stoutly maintained each his own cause on that hotly-contested field. The dying and the dead lay in mangled heaps, and nature, as if to make some atonement for the cruelty of her children to one another, sends the gentle rain to cool the parched and thirsty lips, which no loving hand may reach, and soon night draws a friendly curtain over all.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AMONG the five wounded soldiers that are carried to Belmont from the battlefield of Antietam, we find the gallant Randolph. And he considers it a singular piece of good fortune which allowed him to fall so near friends who will minister to his wants. His own home is in the Southern part of the State, and since the opening of the campaign in Virginia he had, at Mrs. Harvey's invitation, considered Belmont in that light, for he was inseparably associated with her dear Frank who had laid down his young life on the plains of Manassas.

"Sambo," said Belle, as he came into the dining-room one morning to get his master's breakfast, "did you know you were free? Here is a proclamation from Mr. Lincoln, setting you all free."

"Lawdy, Miss Belle, Abe Linkum can't make me no freer 'an I allus was, 'sides, what right he got freein' odder folks niggers, anyhow?"

"I suppose he thinks you all want to be free, Sam." said Belle, anxious to hear his views on the subject.

"I jes' tell you now, miss, some o' the sorriest lookin' folks ever I did see was free niggers, what went up Norf an' come back agin; dey was de 'oneries' lookin' po' souls, *genteel* cullid folks wouldn't so much as notice 'em. Ef we all 'longed to Abe Linkum he wouldn't be in sich a mighty hurry to sot us free."

"What you know 'bout pol'ticks, you black nigger, you?" said Susan, a maid, in an undertone, and scowling at Sam, "you better go 'long wid your Mars John's breakfas'; ef you stan' dar gabbin' till ebrything gits cole, you'd wish you was a free nigger 'fore he gits done wid you."

The Emancipation proclamation, which had just been published, had different effects on the various ones. The majority

of them rejoiced, as was natural, though there were many among them who had good homes and kind masters, who were not so carried away by the prospect of freedom as those less happily situated. In many instances, throughout the State of Virginia especially, the house servants, though black and slaves, enjoyed more freedom and could boast more privileges of every kind than the hard-worked wives and daughters of the average farmer in the free States.

The popular crusade against the terrible evil in the South, however, enlisted their fullest sympathies, and the mighty work of removing the mote from the Southern eye caused them to completely ignore the hindering beam which obscured their own.

"Miss Susing," said Sambo, resuming the conversation so abruptly broken off in the dining-room, when seated at their own breakfast table in the kitchen, "you wouldn't take pervantage of Mr. Linkum's procerlation an' go wid de Yanks nex' time dey comes, would you?"

"I ain't gwine to say *what* I's gwine to do, but I'll tell you dis much, it's a blessed thing to feel as how you is free ef you chooses," answered Susan.

"I has trabelled fro de Norf a heap, me an Mars John, en day don't treat cullid pussins 'cordin' to my notions. Dey is one t'ing 'twould jes lay dis nigger right out, an' dat is de eberlastin' cole vittles what dey is allus pokin' at you," said Sam, reaching for a hot roll. "Now, ladies, dat is de Gawd's truf e, sho es I sets here," he added, observing the incredulous looks upon the faces of his hearers.

"*Is* you tellin de *truf e*, Sam?" said Susan, as if she might reconsider her sentiments just expressed, if Sam could establish this last assertion.

"Indeed, I jes' pined fur one o' yo' nice flaky buns las' time we put up at de St. Nicholas, Mrs. Pompey," said Sam, smiling at the cook who sat opposite, and whose rotundity entirely obscured the chair in which she sat.

"Sam, you know dat's a lie, you know de white folks does hab hot vittles," returned Mrs. Pompey, incredulously.

"Really, Mrs. Pompey, I doesn't like to conterdick yo' ladyship, but 'pon my soul, I has eat mo' hot rolls dis mawnin' dan I seed all de time me an Mars John was up dar, de summer 'fore de waugh come," answered Sambo, helping himself to still another roll.

"Well," said Susan, presently, stretching and yawning, "sposen I must git up an' go to work; now ef I was free I'd set here jes' as long as I wanted."

"Yes, an' ef you sot thar 's long 's you wanted, you'd git powerful hongry 'fore I'd feed you," said the cook, leaning her fat elbows on the table in an attitude of repose.

"My dear Miss Susing, let me give you my repinion," began Sam, with a dignified air. "Folks is got to wuck one way or anudder, en, ef we's free an' gits sick, who's gwine to take keer o' us. As it is, ef I gits sick, I jes' lays in de bed an' takes it easy, an' I don't hurry 'bout gittin' well nuther," he added, with a chuckle.

"Sam, thar's your bell ringin' fur the second time," said Dinah, who just then joined them.

"Excuse me, ladies," said he, rising deliberately, "I make my redieus," and, bowing low, left the ladies to rest still further.

"Sam's a fool," said the cook, as soon as he was safely out of hearing. "Dinah, don't you reckon he's lyin', when he ses de white folks up Norf don't eat no hot vittles."

"No," says Dinah, "I heard dat tale before, en I 'spec' it s true. But, freedom is a blessed thing, anyhow. Ole master and mistis is bofe mighty good, but I b'lieve I'd like to be free."

"Me, too, Dinah," said Susan, "en I jes tell you, I's a gwine, nex' time de Union sojers comes. Dey tried de best to git me to go when dey was here befo'."

Randolph was able, after awhile, to be wheeled on his couch into a porch which ran along outside his window. The other

wounded soldiers in the house were fortunate in not having wounds that confined them to their rooms at all, and the music and cheerful conversation of the young people below, sounds of which were continually wafted to him through the open windows, made him quite restless to be well enough once more to join in their merriment, for he very justly supposed that Winchester would again, and before very long, have to be given up.

He sent Sambo one morning with a formal invitation to Mrs. Harvey, to visit him and bring the young ladies with her; to which they returned answer that he might certainly expect them, and very soon thereafter they made their appearance.

"Now, that I have you all here together," said John, "let me express my thanks for the many good deeds which have contributed to my comfort and pleasure since my wound."

"We are not the only ones to whom you are indebted, captain," said Carrie. "You think you have stolen a march on us, but we know more than you think we do, and only wait to hear the name of the pretty stranger who is so much interested in your recovery."

Randolph looked puzzled. "I declare you are talking in riddles," he answered. "I don't understand at all."

"He is certainly very good at pretending, if he does," said Belle, laughing.

"You will have to come to my rescue, my dear Mrs. Harvey. These young ladies are bent on quizzing me, what do they mean?" he asked, imploringly.

"They allude, I think," answered Mrs. Harvey, "to a young girl who has called here several times to inquire for you and bring you nice things, but she always declined to leave any message or give her name. Belle and Carrie think she lives in Winchester, but she says she has never seen you but once, and that for only a very short while. Naturally, we have all wondered at her interest."

"I am more and more puzzled," said John, "and have no idea who the girl can possibly be."

Sambo, arriving just then, whispered something to Mrs. Harvey.

"There is some one down stairs, now, Sambo tells me, waiting to speak to me," said Mrs. Harvey. "I expect it is the young lady of whom we were just speaking. Shall I bring her up?"

"By all means," exclaimed both girls at once, enjoying Randolph's confusion.

"I believe I would rather know a little more about it first," said John, laughing. "I don't like to be surrounded in this way in my helpless condition. However, Mrs. Harvey," he continued, "if it is the same one, bring her up of course, if you think best."

With these instructions, Mrs. Harvey went below stairs, the girls presently following her, promising, however, to return as soon as the mysterious visitor had left. John, meanwhile, grew more and more curious, until Mrs. Harvey returned, bringing the stranger with her, who proved to be our friend, Jennie, as the reader has doubtless surmised.

She was instantly recognized and shaken warmly by the hand, whereupon Mrs. Harvey withdrew, and Jennie soon told her story as to how she had come by the all-important paper, and now she had reason to fear that it might be traced to Jacob, who, she blushingly confided, was dearer to her than anything else in the world. The object of her present visit, she explained, was to beg that he would never mention how he came by the paper she had brought, nor ever allude in any way to the origin of their acquaintance. With this request, she arose to go, after Randolph had given the required promise.

She had been gone but a short time when both Belle and Carrie returned.

"We are just dying to know who she is and what she wanted," they exclaimed, in almost the same breath.

"I am truly sorry I can't tell you much about her now," said Randolph. "I will sometime, though," he added, as he realized the predicament in which he was placed.

"And you have only seen her once before?" inquired Carrie.

"But once, verily, and then only for a few minutes. I never even knew her name until this visit," affirmed Randolph.

"It is really growing romantic," said Belle.

"And I am being rapidly consumed with curiosity," added Carrie.

"I am exceedingly sorry that I can not gratify it at once," said John. "It would really give me much pleasure to do so."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself to be sorry," said Belle, loftily. "We are not the least anxious to know. By the way of changing the subject, do you know I think Sambo is quite smitten with Susan?"

"I hope, for poor Sam's sake, the fair Susan smiles upon him," said John, very much relieved to have the subject changed.

"If you heard some of the names she calls him, you would think there was little ground for such hope," said Carrie, laughing.

"Ah, Miss Carrie, if we only judged your sex by what they *said*, I am afraid we should never form a just estimate of them," said Randolph, in reproachful tones and darting a swift glance at Belle.

"He is trying to make us out veritable hypocrites, Carrie," said Belle. "Let us go."

"Indeed, I will take it all back," said Randolph, in a tone of alarm, "if you will only remain."

Just then the bell sounded for dinner, and both girls left the room.

In a little while, Sambo appeared with his master's dinner, and, placing it on a table before him, stood waiting in a respectful attitude.

"Sambo," said Randolph, presently, "they tell me that you have been making love to Susan since I have been wounded and not able to look after you. Is it so?"

"Laus, Mars John," answered Sam, and hiding his grinning countenance behind the waiter which he held in his hand, "don' you know I has better sense dan to ask any young 'oman de likes o' Miss Susing to sheer my home wid me, when I doesn't know from one day to de nex' whar Ole Jack is agwine to let us res' up at. Dat is de Gawd's trufe, Mars John, es I stan' here."

"Really, Sam, those are fine sentiments, and I honor you for them," answered his master, "but on the other hand I hope you are not trifling with this young woman's affections."

"Lor' no, sah; she 'pears mighty well able to take keer o' herself, Miss Susing do; an' 'twixt you an' me, Mars John, I b'lieve in my soul she fixin' now to go off wid de Yanks nex' time dey comes."

"That being the case, I am very glad indeed that you have not allowed your affections to become seriously involved," said Randolph.

"It 'pears mons'ous like it. She mighty proud kase Abe Linkum sot her free, 's ef he had de right. I tells 'em all I knows 'bout de way dey treats cullid pussons up dar, speckin' you to cram your liver full o' cole vittles an' 'sociate wid de po' white trash. Yes, sah, I tole 'em all I knowed 'bout de way dey treats Christians."

Randolph rapidly grew better now, and very soon, with Sam's assistance, he could come down stairs. News from Richmond caused them to fear that Winchester would be again abandoned, and that before long. The enemy were again concentrating in front of the capital, and all available forces were being sent to meet them, and once again Mrs. Harvey discussed the propriety of leaving her home. Her only remaining son was at the Virginia Military Institute, while Mary was at school in Richmond, and her husband in one of the Departments. There seemed

many reasons why she should go, and yet the thought of resigning the old homestead, endeared by so many associations, to what she feared would be destruction, made her again conclude to remain and brave it once more. Belle and Carrie also decided to stay for the present, though hoping to be able to go through the lines under flag of truce later in the winter.

Evidences of the near evacuation of the place increased with each day. The wounded Confederates who had been staying at Belmont had all gone except Randolph, who was yet too lame to walk without a cane. Belle and he were in the sitting room together.

"Did you know that Appleton had been a prisoner in Richmond this summer, Miss Belle, wounded at Gaines' Mill?" asked John, looking up from a letter which he was reading. "Charlie tells me that he saw him; so I suppose there can be no doubt about it."

"There is, indeed, no doubt of it," answered Belle. "I had already heard it; and does Charlie tell you of nothing else in connection with it?" she continued.

"Nothing else," answered Randolph, running his eye over the letter again. "Why?"

"Because I infer from Pauline's last letter that Charlie in some way had him in his power and forbore to take advantage of him," answered Belle. "She makes a very vague allusion to some noble deed of Charlie's, but leaves it largely to my imagination."

"Her infatuation for that fellow Appleton astonishes me; I can't account for it at all," said John, "and when I think of Charlie making himself miserable about her I lose all patience with him."

"Indeed, I agree with you," answered Belle; "I thought it was a passing fancy with Pauline, which she would have tired of long ago. Such a noble fellow as Charlie Holmes deserves better luck, it would seem."

"I hope you will have better taste than to lose your heart with any of the fine-looking Yankees that will be coming here soon," said John.

"I shall not promise," answered Belle, in a tantalizing tone.

"I wouldn't give a fig for his chances of living, if I were to get him in the same box that Charlie seems to have had Appleton," said John.

"You wouldn't be a good soldier, or set your men the proper example, did you fail to shoot any Yankee under arms that you had the opportunity of doing," answered Belle.

"I should be especially particular to put that Yank out of the way, anyhow," said Randolph, laughing.

"If I showed such bad taste in my preferences, I think you would be justifiable; but poor Charlie Holmes, I do feel so sorry for him," she added, presently.

"I'll send him to you for consolation," said John, provokingly; "I feel so sorry for him, too."

"What makes you so disagreeable this morning?" asked Belle, presently.

"Humph! I thought agreeing with you was the most agreeable thing I could do," answered Randolph.

"Not invariably," answered Belle, a little mysteriously, and added, "remember that in the future, and another thing I would like you to remember also is, that I don't like mysteries."

"Really," answered Randolph, in astonishment, "that *is* a revelation. I thought if there was anything dear to the feminine heart it was a mystery."

"You need to be enlightened on a good many points, I find," answered Belle, with energy.

"I can recall but one just now upon which I would like a little light thrown," said Randolph, in very earnest tones.

"There are several upon which I would like to be enlightened," rejoined Belle, quickly.

"What, for instance?" said John.

"When people don't keep their promises, for one," answered Belle, a little nervously, "and how can people *possibly* be under great obligations to a person whom they have seen but once?"

"Now here comes in the proof of what I just affirmed—who on earth but a woman could unravel the mysterious language which you have just used?" asked John.

"None so blind as those that will not see," answered Belle.

"I confess I am blind, but not willfully so, Miss Belle; indeed I am not," said Randolph.

"You at least must plead guilty to having a very short memory," she rejoined.

"I'll plead guilty to anything and sue humbly for pardon, if you'll only tell me what you mean," he said, anxiously.

"Have you really, then, forgotten the promise you made not long ago to tell me about the mysterious visitor you had when you were confined to your couch?" asked Belle, blushing to the roots of her hair.

"Yes, yes," answered John, deliberately, and regarding Belle earnestly, "I remember now, though, indeed, I had forgotten. And have you really cared to know about that girl's visit all this time? Tell me, why did you care?" he asked, in a low tone.

"Ain't I a woman?" she answered, indifferently.

"If that is the only reason, I shall not tell you anything about it," answered John, quickly.

"Very well, then," said Belle, rising abruptly, "the information will doubtless keep, but I must go."

Randolph caught her hand as she attempted to pass him and held it tight.

"You shall not leave me in anger, at least," he said, excitedly, "and won't you trust me a little longer for that confession? Believe me, that when I do make it, it will be all right," he continued, in tender tones.

Belle, meanwhile, made desperate efforts to release her hand, but he persistently held it.

"I will not let you go until you promise, and it must be complete, unqualified by a doubt," he continued.

"You ask a great deal of me, I think," said Belle, coloring.

"I admit that I do," he answered, "I wouldn't ask as much of any other living being."

"You must really let me go, Mr. Randolph," said Belle, bringing all her dignity to her support.

"You must really promise or I can not," he said, beseechingly.

"Very well, I promise," said Belle, dropping her eyes.

"You make me very happy by doing so," he said, releasing her hand, and Belle crossed the room; when nearly to the door she looked around, and smiling mischievously, said:

"Have the courts not decided that 'the oath,' when exacted under compulsion, is not binding?" and left the room before he could answer.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE next day Winchester was again evacuated, and her long-suffering citizens once more braced themselves for the ordeal General Geary took early advantage of the situation to march his forces into the town and establish again the authority of the military. Many of the negroes had fled from their homes during the occupation of the place by Banks, but now the official seal had been set to their freedom by Mr. Lincoln's proclamation and all were alike imbued with the spirit of liberty. The domestic arrangements of many households were thus suddenly thrown into the wildest confusion, which, except for the serious consequences often involved, would have been truly laughable.

Carrie Mason, with Belle Harvey, had gone into Winchester to their Aunt Maria's, to be with the old lady and afford what relief and assistance they could, in the event of her requiring it, as she had been very dependent on her servants for many years. Miss Maria flattered herself for the first few days, as they did not leave at once, that they were not going at all, and was thus lulled into a treacherous security.

One morning, however, after waiting impatiently in bed until long after the usual hour for her maid's appearance, trying to conjecture the cause of her absence, the real reason never once suggesting itself, she was startled by the sound of voices in the hall; presently the door opened and in came Belle and Carrie, with toilets only half made.

"Do you know, Aunt Maria," said Belle, "that there is not a servant on the lot. We have been everywhere looking; the whole lower part of the house is open, they must have gone in the night."

"What!" ejaculated Miss Maria, half rising in the bed and

pulling her night-cap all awry with the movement, "has Phœbe gone, and Kitty, and John, and Ruth, too," she continued, "all! The ungrateful creatures, what am I to do?" she wailed forth. "At my time of life, too."

"Never mind, aunt," said Carrie, soothingly, "Belle and I will do everything."

"Why, my dear children, what can you do? We all will starve, I know," she continued.

"No, indeed, we will not," answered Belle, who just then returned with materials for a fire, "Carrie and I are going to get breakfast while you dress, now," she added, cheerfully.

In a few minutes they had a bright fire kindled and everything in readiness for Miss Maria's toilet. The old lady now declared that she could do without them, and they, gracefully accepting the situation, went together to the kitchen, to take their first lessons in cooking. It was a merry frolic at first, till burnt fingers and scorched faces brought them to a sense of their dependence upon the fugitive cook.

After much time spent in the preparation, Belle went to announce to Aunt Maria that breakfast was ready, and with quite an air of triumph the old lady was brought in, and seated in her accustomed place, Belle essaying to wait on her, while Carrie remained in the kitchen to bake some cakes. The former handed her aunt a biscuit, quite triumphantly. Taking it, the old lady broke it open, eyeing it suspiciously all the time, however, and at the first mouthful made an ugly face.

Belle, hoping to be complimented on this, her first, attempt, was horrified to see the face, as well as to hear what she said:

"What on earth did you make these biscuits of, Belle?"

"I made them of flour, of course, aunt," she answered, quickly. "Why?"

"Is that all?" asked poor Miss Maria.

"No, I put water, too, was not that right?" she answered, demurely.

"Why! child, did you put no *shortening* in them of any kind?" she asked, and eyeing Belle fixedly over her spectacles.

"No, indeed, aunt, I did not, I am sorry to say, but you would have thought I had if you had seen the dough draw up in a heap as fast as I rolled it out."

"Why, that was the reason it did it, child;" then taking another bite, "no salt, either, what am I to eat?" said the old lady, in despair.

"I am so sorry that I forgot the salt and the shortening, aunt, but I will know better next time, I hope," she said, in apologetic tones. Just then, remembering that she had left Carrie making some cakes, she went to bring them, but found poor Carrie in despair. 'Tis true, the cakes had baked, but positively refused to *turn*.

"Belle, what shall I do?" she exclaimed. Her face was besmeared with flour, as well as hands and dress, and her crimson cheeks and bloodshot eyes bore evidence of the struggle she had made to overcome the rebellious cakes.

"It seemed so easy to Aunt Phœbe," she continued, "she would just slip the knife under and flirt them over in the least time, why can't I get them to turn, too?" Just then, making a desperate effort to "flirt" one over, she landed it in the farthest corner of the kitchen.

"Indeed, the situation is becoming serious," said Belle, as they looked in dismay after the rapidly-disappearing cake. "My biscuits are fearful, too, I didn't put any salt in them or shortenin', as Aunt Maria calls it."

And looking at each other, they were simultaneously struck with the ridiculous picture that each presented, and could no longer refrain from a hearty laugh.

Poor Miss Maria, meanwhile, was groaning over her trials, and wishing that the Yankee nation had but one neck. Interfering with the stereotyped habits of three-score years, or more, was no

trivial matter, and she was calmly beginning to contemplate starvation.

At this crisis of affairs, fortunately, Mrs. Harvey arrived. The exodus had been quite general throughout the neighborhood, only the superannuated and some few very shrewd ones waited to hear the experience of the pioneers in the movement, before taking advantage of the opportunities offered them by their generous liberators. Apprehending that affairs were in just the condition in which she found them, at Aunt Maria's, Mrs. Harvey had come to their relief.

Dinah was among the wise ones, and another old woman who was too feeble for the trip had remained at Belmont, so she had come to take them all back with her, thinking their united efforts would accomplish more for the general weal. She laughed heartily at the appearance of the girls as they presented themselves, and going into the kitchen, soon showed them wherein they had failed.

With her assistance and instruction they soon had a comfortable breakfast ready, and fortified with this, they all went out to Belmont together.

Almost as soon as the Federal troops had taken possession of the town, emissaries had been sent out into all the kitchens and back premises, to inform the negroes that they were free. Meetings were called, and they all thronged together at the hour of midnight to perfect the final arrangements for their contemplated flight.

"The church" was a general place of rendezvous, and a last meeting had assembled for consultation and the comparison of experiences. It was opened as usual, with a fervent prayer by one of the brethren, but soon the excitement grew so great, and the amens so loud and frequent, that his voice was finally lost in the confusion.

Presently a single voice could be distinguished struggling above the din:

"Moses he done led de hosts
Up to de land ob Caanyan,

"Lock dat lion's jaw, done tole you,
Lock dat lion's jaw;
Lock dat lion's jaw, done tole you,
Lock dat lion's jaw.

"Dar whar de honey an' milk am flowin',
Fur we po' sinners what's up an' agwine.
Lock dat lion's jaw, done tole you, etc.

"Abraham an' Isaac am comin' fur to meet us,
While Abraham Linkum is clearin' de way fur us.
Lock dat lion's jaw, done tole you," etc.

Now succeeded the wildest jubilee, happy females jumping up and clapping their hands, shouting, "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!"

"Nancy Anne," asked one of the more timid sisters of another, in an interval of the din, "whar is *you* agwine, honey, when you gits dar?"

"I's gwine to de lan' of freedom, sister, bressed be de good Lawd," she answered.

"But, Nancy Anne," said the same voice, "what you gwine to do to git a livin', when you gits dar?"

"What's I gwine to do to git a livin', you fool, you? Why, we's gwine to be *free*," she almost screamed, in indignation.

"But, Nancy Anne," persisted the more practical sister, "won't we have to wuck no more, when we is free?"

"De sojers tells me we jes has to set down an' be ladies, en de white folks what dey is gwine ter captivate down Souf has to wait on us. I'd like to know de good o' bein' free ef you has to wuck like a nigger," and resuming her song of glory, she passed on through the throng.

"Before I'd be a slave,
I'd be buried in my grave," etc.

The singing was loud and noisy, and a general embracing was being indulged in, when suddenly there appeared among them a white man, clad in the uniform of a Federal chaplain. Instantly there was silence, and an attention such as, doubtless, was accorded to Moses, by the malcontent Israelites, when he returned from the Mount.

"My friends," said this gentleman of the cloth, "I am sent to tell you that all who want to leave their old homes of slavery must be at the first toll-gate on the turnpike, to the north of the town, at four o'clock in the morning. There will be a train of army wagons, for all those who have no means of their own, but all of you must bring whatever you can in the way of valuables, jewelry, and silverware that you can lay your hands on. For, as the Lord said unto the children of Israel: 'And it shall come to pass that when ye go, ye shall not go empty, and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.'

"You will remember that in our last meeting I explained what was meant by that verse from Holy Scripture. And, as of old they were commanded to give at least a tenth of all their possessions to the Lord, so, now, I command, that you bring a portion of all you may get to me. For, as it is said in Holy Writ, 'The laborer is worthy of his hire.'"

He continued in this strain for some time longer, and, by ingeniously weaving together detached portions of Scripture and wresting them from their original meaning, to suit his own case, he soon convinced these credulous creatures that he was a special messenger from Abraham Lincoln, who they firmly believed was raised up by God to be their deliverer from bondage.

Such influence had he gained over their ignorance, that, at his instigation, they would have dared any violence.

Fortunately, in this instance, he counseled nothing worse than stealing.

CHAPTER XX.

COMMUNICATION with their friends in the South was now almost entirely cut off from the citizens in the neighborhood of Winchester, and the prospect for any immediate release was a dismal one.

In view of their straightened means, and the difficulty of getting supplies of any kind, Mrs. Harvey finally concluded to make the effort to send Belle and Carrie to Richmond, most of the family being already there.

GENERAL CLUSERET.

Their ability to get a passport through the lines of the Federals, however, was a question which yet remained to be solved.

*Accordingly, Mrs. Harvey went with Belle one evening to the headquarters of the commanding officer, †General Cluseret, a Frenchman. They were ushered, with much ceremony, into the presence of a magnificent-looking man, whose breast was ablaze with badges of distinction and honorable orders, which had been conferred by different European magnates, in whose service he had distinguished himself.

*Actual experience of two young ladies of Winchester.

†General Cluseret was afterward "Delegate of War" during the existence of the Commune in Paris.

Receiving them with characteristic gallantry, he granted their application for a passport without imposing a single restriction or condition.

Congratulating themselves upon this piece of singular and unexpected good luck, they hurried forward their preparations for the trip. Without much difficulty, Mrs. Harvey secured the services of a respectable mechanic in the neighborhood, who, owning a carriage and trusty pair of horses, was glad of the opportunity thus offered to remove them to a place of safety.

All being in readiness, they finally started off in the gray dawn of a winter's morning, three days having elapsed since receiving their passport. They approached the picket-post on the edge of town with fear and trembling, notwithstanding they were armed with the required authority, after showing which they were allowed to proceed without interruption. Congratulating themselves that all their trouble was over, and indulging the hope of soon being with their friends again, they were scarcely prepared for what awaited them after driving two miles further. For encamped along the road ahead of them was a small section of the "Grand Army;" again their hearts sank within them, as they were once more brought to a halt, while the sentry examined their passport.

"Pass on," he said, returning it again, and the welcome words caused their sinking hearts to rebound once more with a thrill of delight.

They now found it necessary to leave the main road, however, as it was at this point, and for some distance, blockaded by huge piles of rails and rocks. Driving through the woods and by-paths for about another mile they once more regained the turnpike.

"I begin to feel like drawing a long breath at last," said Belle, "for surely they can have no more pickets out this road."

"They must be mortally afraid of the 'Rebs' if they keep that many men at all their out-posts," said Carrie, "but how charming to breathe the atmosphere of liberty once more."

"You think there is no more danger now, do you not, Mr. Hobbs?" asked Belle, of the driver.

"Well, yes, ma'am; I think we may consider ourselves as about out of the woods at last," he answered, "but, upon my soul, I never seen so many pickets in my life."

Just then a clatter of horses' feet startled them from their security, and Mr. Hobbs arose in his seat to look back over the top of the carriage.

"My Lord, ladies, here come a lot of them cavalry, just a flyin' up the road—they must be comin' after us," he ejaculated, in tones of alarm.

"Whip the horses, make them fly, Mr. Hobbs," said Belle, and catching up the whip she laid it on herself.

Both girls were standing up as well as they could, and looking out of the little window in the back of the carriage. The horses were now going at a frightful speed, as they fully realized that they were being pursued.

"If we can only keep ahead a little longer I know they will be afraid to follow us very far," said Belle, in anxious tones, as she saw that their pursuers were gaining on them.

"But they are almost up to us now," said Carrie, wringing her hands.

"And 'taint no use to kill the horses," chimed in Mr. Hobbs, as he began to slacken his rein, "they are bound to catch us.'

Then Belle, taking another look, said, "Yes, it *is* useless, Mr. Hobbs, they are nearly up with us," and they awaited their coming as calmly as they could.

In a few moments, now, they were surrounded, and a head thrust rudely into the window.

"I have orders to arrest this party—driver, turn your horses around quick," said the soldier.

"I can't turn here," he answered, "the road is too narrow."

"Well, I can," returned the soldier, and, catching the bridle, he wheeled the carriage short around, and came near turning it over an embankment.

Two of the cavalrymen had ridden on ahead a little, evidently to watch and give warning of any attempt at rescue.

"We are traveling under the protection of a pass from General Cluseret," ventured Belle, presently, "by whose authority are we arrested, may I ask?"

"That is none of your business, or mine, either, for that matter," answered the fellow, gruffly.

Whereupon, both girls subsided into an anxious silence. The carriage was surrounded on all sides, and each one of the party carefully watched. Conscious of their innocence, they could not comprehend the reason of this singular treatment.

They were not aware that during the interval of receiving and using their passport, the gentlemanly Frenchman, from whom they had obtained it, had been superseded by one who outranked him.

Upon reaching the encampment where they had previously noticed so many soldiers, the carriage was brought to a halt, while the leader of the party, who had made the arrest, rode off to consult an officer, who appeared at the door of his tent, as the carriage drove up.

The soldier communicated something in an undertone, and the officer looked toward the carriage, where the poor girls sat waiting in breathless anxiety to know what was to become of them. After parleying with the cavalryman for some minutes longer, as if declining something which he seemed to urge, the officer came toward the carriage and looked in, then turning, went back to the soldier again. The girls then heard him say in an emphatic manner:

"I will not, I will resign first," and then disappeared within the door of his tent; presently coming out again, he returned to the carriage, and, climbing up, took his seat beside the driver.

He now gave the order to move on, and with a guard of four cavalry men on each side, they took up their line of march once more for Winchester. As soon as they were fairly under way the kind-hearted officer, who proved to be a chivalrous Irishman,* turned to Belle and said, in an undertone :

"I had orders to have your persons and baggage searched at my post, but I would not do it; I don't care what the consequences are. I shall take you to Cluseret, from whom you obtained your pass, and who alone has the right to arrest you, and only in the event, then, of your having violated the conditions of it."

"We are very fortunate to have fallen into your hands, if such an indignity as that awaited us," answered Belle, also in a whisper; "but our pass was granted without any restrictions, whatever, and I can't understand, at all, why we are not allowed to go on."

"I think," he answered, "that Milroy must have ordered the arrest; he superseded Cluseret two days ago, and hearing that this pass had been given without restrictions, he allowed you all to go, hoping you would start South freighted with a Southern mail, which he expects to capture."

"He will certainly be disappointed," answered Carrie; "obtaining the pass as we did we were especially careful to keep the good faith in which it was given."

"Yes, indeed," added Belle, laughing, "we would have felt much more like carrying contraband articles, if we had been made to swear that we would not."

"If you have anything about your persons," continued the officer, presently, "that might in any way compromise you, I will take and keep it until after you are searched, for Milroy would as soon send you to the 'Old Capitol' as not."

At this the girls exchanged glances—they felt they had a friend about them in whom they could confide.

"I have a pistol," said Belle, presently. "It is my own pri-

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* Lieutenant Dan Curran, a gallant young Irishman.

vate property, and I will not resign it to any one without a desperate struggle."

"I fear you will be harshly dealt with, if it is found on your person," he answered, "and, if you can get it off without being seen, you had better let me put it in my pocket. I will promise to return it in good order."

But, with eight pairs of eyes spying their every movement, Belle knew it would be impossible to untie the silken sash which confined it around her waist, and hand it to the officer, unseen.

"I can't take it off," she presently said, "and if I should be caught giving it to you, it would place you in a very unpleasant position; besides, too, it would be an admission that I am doing wrong in wearing it, which I will not concede, by any means. Although I feel very grateful for your kindness, I will keep it," she added, resolutely.

Very soon now they reached Winchester, and the carriage containing the fair prisoners was driven first to the headquarters of General Cluseret, who appeared in the porch as soon as it had halted. In an excited manner and unmeasured terms he denounced the authority that had overstepped the boundary of decency and civilized warfare.

"Take ze ladies avay; dey have no offense," he continued, emphasizing his language with emphatic and angry gesticulations.

They were then driven to the headquarters of General Milroy, by whose order, it now transpired, the arrest had been made.

Belle timidly asked for permission to send her mother word, in order to have her present at the interview with General Milroy, but the guard answered that "his orders were that no communication should be allowed with outside parties."

Whereupon Belle made a plan of her own, and only waited a favorable moment to execute it. The carriage was soon recognized, and the wondering citizens began to throng around, to

find out, if possible, the cause of its return, but none were allowed to come near enough to speak to the occupants. Presently, Carrie called Belle's attention to a girl on the sidewalk, standing very near a point which they had to pass, and looking intently at the carriage. Both recognized Jennie at once. Remembering her parting promise to Randolph, she put aside any little feeling of distrust that might have influenced her, and just as the carriage reached the point nearest where Jennie stood, Belle leaned from the window and said, in her loudest tones, "Tell Mrs. Harvey to come at once."

It was done so suddenly that the guard did not have time to interfere, but the one nearest her placed his hand on his pistol and shook his head in a threatening manner.

Jennie, with her usual ready wit, took in the situation at a glance, and the girls noticed that she started off in a full run in the direction of their home. They now reached an imposing-looking building, where the commanding general had established his headquarters, and files of armed men guarded them on either side as they passed from the carriage and up two flights of stairs into a room, where several officers were assembled.

"Is it asking too much, to inquire into the cause of this singular treatment, sir?" asked Belle, of one of the officers, soon after they were seated.

"Miss," said he, smiling obsequiously, "I've not been advised of the general's reasons for this arrest. They are, doubtless, well grounded, though."

"You are suspected, and with good reason, I imagine, to be carrying aid and comfort to the enemy," said another official, who was also in the room.

"We have nothing that does not belong to us, and to which we are not entitled, I assure you," answered Belle.

"Assurances don't count much on these occasions, Miss. Proofs, positive proofs, are the only things that have any effect," he answered, coolly.

Here Belle arose from her seat, and, deliberately unbuttoning her cloak, she proceeded to take off her pistol, which she had fastened around her waist with an officer's scarf—a memento from a Federal prisoner, which Randoph had left in her care. As she laid it on the table beside her, an amused smile passed over the faces of the officers in the room.

"Do you suppose for a moment that you will be allowed to retain such property as that?" asked one of them, laughing.

"I have no idea of surrendering it, I assure you," answered Belle, with spirit. "I merely take it off to avoid the charge of carrying concealed weapons."

"I have some military caps," said Carrie, "which I have made for some friends in the Southern army. Maybe you would like those as trophies of this event, as I doubt if you will ever get them in any other way."

"Don't be too hard on us, Miss Reb," returned one of them, maliciously, "you might repent it."

The conversation was here interrupted by two soldiers coming in, each carrying several pairs of cavalry boots across his shoulders, and, depositing them in a corner of the room, they went out again.

"You wouldn't be so willing to part with the boots, I guess. They aren't so easy made as caps," said the same officer.

"As they do not belong to us, we have no opinion about them," said Carrie.

"Oh, I guess they do," he answered, as if enjoying the predicament he evidently believed them to be in.

"Well, we *know* they do not," answered both girls, excitedly.

Here the door opened again, and in came the same men, this time laden with boxes.

"Where did all these things come from?" asked one, who spoke now for the first time.

"All come out of the carriage, sir," said one of the men as he was leaving the room again.

"We certainly never saw or heard of them before," said Belle, earnestly.

"Indeed, I assure you they do not belong to us," added Carrie.

"I am very sorry for you, young ladies," said the one who had been chief spokesman, "but you can't get out of it that way."

"Do you suppose that we are saying what is not so?" asked Belle, in nervous tones, and, for the first time since their arrest, both girls felt like giving up to tears, which they had been repressing all the time.

Their unfeigned looks of surprise, as well as their protestations of innocence, must have had their effect on the officers, who seemed to have resolved themselves into a court-martial over them, as, presently, one of them left the room, and, soon returning again with the two soldiers, had all the suspicious articles once more removed.

It afterward transpired that they belonged to the driver, who had secreted them in the carriage, for the purpose of disposing of them at a big premium, when he should reach Dixie.

Before very long the two girls were sent, one at a time, into an adjoining room. Belle, going in first, saw a figure crouched in the farthest corner, but upon recognizing a familiar black face dismissed all fears of any indignity, as she said, "Well, aunty, why am I sent in here?"

"De Lawd knows, Miss; I is a heap wuss skeered an' you is; but de gen'al tole me to see ef you all had any 'spatches 'bout you."

"You will have to take my word for it that there are none about me, for you can't search my person," and so saying she returned quickly to the room she had just left. Carrie was now sent out, and went through very much the same interview.

Upon glancing around, Belle missed her pistol from the table, and turning to the officer who seemed to be chief spokesman, asked in surprised tones:

"What has become of my pistol?"

"I turned it over to the general, miss, along with the caps, which, however, he returned, though the pistol he says he will have to confiscate," he answered.

"Can I not see him, at least," asked Belle, "and make an effort to recover it again?"

"I guess not. I asked him if he would see you, but he declines an interview."

Just then Mrs. Harvey entered the room, and both girls gave way to the tears which could no longer be restrained at sight of a sympathizing friend.

"Why, my children!" she exclaimed, "what is the meaning of all this?" and, turning to one of the officers, she continued, in tones of indignation:

"I am shocked, sir; amazed. Is nothing sacred in the eyes of your officials. Is not a passport from your highest officer a pledge of security, at least until that pass is known to have been violated? What civilized government under the sun would permit the arrest of two defenseless girls, traveling under protection of an official paper, and subject them to such treatment, without positive knowledge of some offense on their part?"

The officers did, at last, begin to look ashamed of themselves, especially Major Keyes, who got up and left the room.

"I have just come from the room below here," Mrs. Harvey went on, "where I found, after searching, unaided and rebuffed at every turn, your baggage, all open, and being searched by two of General Milroy's staff, the general, himself, superintending the manly occupation. Soon after I arrived, though, he left the room, being convinced, I suppose, that your trunks contained nothing unusual in a young lady's outfit."

"How much longer are we to remain here, sir?" ventured Belle, presently.

"Not long, I sincerely hope, ladies," he answered, taking out his watch, as they now seemed thoroughly convinced of the

mistake they had made, and, before very long, Major Keyes returned and told them that they were at liberty to go.

"Am I not to have my pistol, major?" asked Belle, anxiously.

"I am sorry to say that the general declines to return it to you," he answered, politely.

"Can't I see him, myself, and ask for it?" she said, as she stood hesitating on the stairway.

"I do not really believe you would accomplish anything, and only subject yourself to another refusal. I told him I thought it was due you, after the mistake that has been made," he added, dropping his voice.

"Very well," said Belle, but she had made up her mind to see Milroy before she left the building, and, with that object in view, she kept herself carefully in the rear of the party as they descended the long flight of stairs. When they reached the foot, she noticed a door on the landing with Milroy's name on it, and underneath, in large letters, was written "Private room."

Quick as thought, her hand was on the knob and the door open, before the rest of the party were aware of it. She had "bearded the Douglas in his hall," for there stood General Milroy on the rug before the fire. He looked, in mute astonishment, at first one and another of the party, who had now joined her, and, without preface or apology, she preferred her request:

"General Milroy, I came for my pistol," she said, in a tone of voice that seemed to preclude the possibility of a doubt as to her getting it, and, seeing it lying on the end of the mantel, advanced toward it as she spoke.

The old general was taken as completely by surprise as if a masked battery had opened on his ear, and Major Keyes now came to his rescue.

"The young lady came in of her own accord, general. She wanted to make an effort to recover her pistol, to which she seems decidedly attached," he added.

"It is a curious ornament for a lady, but I guess she can have it," he answered, as he saw there was no getting rid of so importunate a party in any other way.

Major Keyes now handed it to her. Taking it proudly in her hands, she turned to the general and said:

"I do not carry it as an ornament at all, I assure you, sir, but I find it a very necessary protection in the present state of the country."

Major Keyes at once availed himself of the propitious moment to prefer another request:

"General," he said, "will you not give these ladies a pass and an escort beyond your lines, now?"

"Yes, I can—to be sure I will," jerked out the old general, in a spasmodic sort of way.

"We are greatly obliged, general," said Carrie, with an air of lofty grandeur, "but I think the next passport under which we travel up the Valley will be signed by General Jackson."

Alas, they little knew that the immortal Jackson would never more return to gladden the hearts of the people in his beloved Valley.

"Do you suppose for a moment that I would allow them again to run such risks as those through which they have just passed?" said Mrs. Harvey.

"But, madam, I assure you it would not occur again," urged the general. "This *Union* must *be preserved*, and such occurrences can not be avoided, sometimes."

A smile passed around the faces of the ladies as the poor old Union was again paraded, the convenient scape-goat for their irregularities.

"Excuse me, general," answered Mrs. Harvey, "but I could have no faith in any guarantee that you might give me, after this, so we will bid you good morning, and bide our time."

So saying, they left the apartment, Belle holding her pistol aloft in triumph, as they reached the street below.

Milroy sent several times, during the next few days, offering transportation and an escort, under flag of truce, to any point in the Valley, but invariably received the same answer which they had first given. Finally, Major Keyes was sent to urge an acceptance of this offer, but even his eloquence failed.

"Is there nothing, Miss Harvey, that I can do, personally, to show how heartily sorry I am for the whole affair?" he asked of Belle.

"Nothing, thank you," she answered, with just a little touch of irony; but after a moment's reflection, added:

"There is one thing, major, in which you might aid me. I would like to write my father a true account of how we have been treated. Could you promise to send the letter by flag of truce?"

"I will, indeed," he replied, "with much pleasure."

"But," said Belle, good-humoredly, "remember, if I say all that I think, it will not be very complimentary to a good many who wear the United States uniform, General Milroy least of all and if he sees the letter I am sure it will not go."

"He shall not see it, I promise, and it *shall* go," he replied, in emphatic tones.

"Very well then, I will venture it," said Belle.

"It seems impossible to convince you, Miss Harvey. that I mean what I say," answered the major, impatiently.

"Well, major, I admit that it will be right difficult to convince me that any good thing can come out of Nazareth, after the experience through which we have just passed," she answered, saucily.

As was proved, however, she did him injustice, for her account of it to her father in Richmond, such a one as would never have gone by ordinary flag of truce, was sent under seal to Major Keyes, and her father received it just as she wrote it, showing that he had kept his word, making one of the exceptions to the rule that she had applied to the majority.

The reason of General Milroy's great anxiety to send the two girls South now became apparent. General Cluseret, the Frenchman who had given them the pass, upon learning of the treatment they had received at Milroy's hands, expressed himself in such unmeasured terms of his superior officer that he caused him to be placed under arrest; whereupon the gallant Frenchman resigned, and demanded an investigation.

The young Irish officer who had befriended them on the occasion of their arrest, now came to them with a message from General Cluseret.

"Would the young ladies go to Washington City, at his expense, and appear before the court martial that had summoned him, and support his case with their testimony?"

Both girls would have gone gladly, whether prompted, though, by motives of philanthrophy, or the love of adventure, I can not say; but Mrs. Harvey, fearing graver complications, declined to allow them, and, very soon thereafter, General Cluseret resigned his commission, saying he had not joined the United States army to war against women.

CHAPTER XXI.

NOTWITHSTANDING the mournful prospect before them, to which both Belle and Carrie had quite resigned themselves, Mrs. Harvey was much perplexed to know how she should solve the problem of existence in the event of a prolonged occupation of the neighborhood by the enemy. Her stock of Virginia Bank money was growing alarmingly small, that being the only medium of exchange between the local and foreign population. The few stores of the citizens had all been closed, and only the sutlers belonging to the army allowed to supply their wants.

In order to profit by this humane arrangement, however, the lucky citizen who possessed Virginia currency had first to exchange it, at a tremendous discount, for United States scrip; then, in order to invest these proceeds in the necessaries of life, a permit had to be procured from the provost, which was only obtainable upon taking what was known then as the *iron-clad oath*, which meant to forswear all sympathy with the Confederate Government or its soldiers, and to do all in one's power to break it down and destroy its influence. Such was the oath, in substance.

Except in the cases of such citizens (and there were such cases) as could boast very elastic consciences, a "permit to buy" on such conditions was almost an unattainable thing.

Mrs. Grey, a friend of Mrs. Harvey's, in a like predicament, had, as a last resort, taken into her house some Federal officers, as boarders.

"How have you found your experiment to operate, my friend?" she asked of her on the occasion of a visit from the former.

"So much better than I had anticipated," she replied. "The

officers at my house are Irishmen, members of the First New York cavalry, and I do not think they endorse what seems the real policy of the Administration, but are honestly fighting to preserve the Union."

"How deluded most of them are in that respect, when it is so palpably a crusade against slavery," said Mrs. Harvey.

Just here they were startled by a loud ring of the door-bell. Dinah, answering, presently brought word that there were two officers in the parlor, who had asked to see Miss Belle.

"What in the world can they want with me, mother?" said Belle, who was suffering from a headache, which she gladly plead as an excuse for not seeing them. "Won't you go down in my place?" she continued, addressing her mother.

Upon reaching the parlor, Mrs. Harvey found General McKey and Captain Alvin, one of whom she had met before, and who had shown her some kindness.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Harvey," said Captain Alvin, "but my business is with Miss Harvey; could I not see her?"

"She would really like to be excused, captain," answered Mrs. Harvey, politely, "in consideration of a headache, from which she has been suffering most of the day."

"It is to her interest that I should see her, madam, unless she is indeed ill," answered the captain.

Thus importuned, Mrs. Harvey returned to tell Belle, and their woman's curiosity now being aroused, they soon descended to the parlor again. Fearing that it had some connection with her arrest, however, Belle was quite uneasy, and entered the parlor with an unsteady step. The kindly greeting she met somewhat reassured her, until invited by Captain Alvin to go with him into an adjoining room. Seeing her hesitation, General McKey said, laughing.

"You need not be at all afraid, Miss Harvey, to go with the captain; I'll guarantee that nothing unpleasant will result from the interview."

Thus encouraged, Belle followed Captain Alvin into the next room. Placing a chair for her, he took one beside her, and drawing a letter from his pocket handed it to her. Recognizing at once the familiar handwriting of her father, which she had not seen for some time, she gave an exclamation of delighted surprise.

"Why, how in the world did you come by this? and it has not been opened, either," she added, turning it over.

"I know it didn't come by flag of truce?" she continued, inquiringly.

"Not much, with that money in it," he answered, in a pleased tone, as a roll of bank notes now became visible.

"General McKey knows why I came here, but we both agreed it would be best that there should be no witnesses to my giving you this letter, for reasons which you will probably understand," he added.

"And there are some good, kind Yankees, after all," said Belle, gratefully.

"I really think you might show your grateful appreciation in some other way than by calling me a Yankee, at least, Miss Harvey," said Captain Alvin, reproachfully; "both General McKey and myself are Irishmen."

"Then, you should not sail under false colors," said Belle, glancing at his uniform.

"We must help preserve this great Union, Miss Harvey. We live under its protection, and must help fight its battles."

"Now, don't, please," said Belle, beseechingly, "I shall not like you at all, though I have such good reason for doing so, if you talk about preserving the Union. We do get *so* sick of that."

"Well, Miss Harvey, I would certainly not condescend to do many of the things that seem, by some, to be considered necessary for that end. For instance, I would not torment or impose on non-combatants and women, especially when so

agreeably represented as in this instance," said Captain Alvin, with graceful audacity.

"I expect mother wonders what keeps me," said Belle, rising. "We had better return to the parlor."

"Possibly, it would be best," assented Captain Alvin, leading the way.

"And you are neither wounded nor captured, Miss Harvey, I see," said General McKey, pleasantly, as she and Captain Alvin once more entered the room.

"Oh, no, general—but am most agreeably surprised, mother, as you will see by this," placing the letter in her mother's hand.

"I am afraid I can not disclaim, so readily, what she has escaped, though, general," said Captain Alvin, as he stood resting his hand on the back of a chair, and looking admiringly at Belle, who had taken a seat at her mother's side.

"We are certainly very grateful to both of you gentlemen," said Mrs. Harvey. "This is a very timely addition to our depleted funds. Of course, it is unnecessary for me to know how you came by this letter, but, if I could return one by the same source, I should be most grateful."

"Very well, madam," answered Captain Alvin, "have it ready, and the first prospect I see of sending it, I will certainly let you know, as I shall be most happy to have any further opportunity of serving you."

"And now, we will bid you good morning, ladies," said General McKey, and both gentlemen took their leave.

"Mother!" exclaimed Belle, in great excitement, as she burst, unceremoniously, into her mother's room, a few evenings later; "here is an ambulance at the door, and several men, who say that they have come for the piano; that they have an order from General Custer.* Will you allow them to take it?"

"You don't tell me that they have come on such an errand?" exclaimed Mrs. Harvey. "I will see them, but it is useless to protest against it. You know they have the power."

* Fact.

Going below stairs, they were met by an officer who had entered the house without ceremony, and was evidently looking for something.

"Have you business here?" asked Mrs. Harvey.

"Yes," he answered, gruffly, "General Custer sent me for a piano; is it in here?" he asked, as he opened the door of the sitting room and found the object of his search. Turning to the men who stood at the door, he added:

"Come on here, now, and get it in the ambulance as quick as possible."

His cool impertinence had quite paralyzed both Mrs. Harvey and Belle, who saw at once that remonstrance would be of no avail, but Belle could not resist one thrust.

"I suppose this is one of the measures necessary to preserve the Union?" she said to the officer who stood waiting for the men. "Heaven help such a Union!"

"Well, where are your folks? Why don't they stay *to home* and look after things?"

"They are where they should be, sir," answered Mrs. Harvey, "in the service of the Confederacy, and where they will remain until all connection with such a Union is severed forever."

"You see, you are trying all you can to break up this Union, and we won't let you do it," returned the gallant officer, who gloried in his power to add this privation to many others that were borne with heroism.

The ambulance containing the piano had scarcely driven from the door before another visitor arrived. This time it was Jennie Dwyer, who had become quite a frequent visitor at Mrs. Harvey's since the occupation of the neighborhood by the enemy.

The trials which were common to all those who sympathized with the South had knit the people into a very close communion.

Jennie had confided the fact that her lover was in Washington City, and, as their acquaintance grew, Belle became convinced that she could keep her promise to Randolph as unreservedly as even he would desire.

The "under-ground railroad" frequently brought letters from Jacob, which sometimes enclosed important items that Jennie was expected to transmit beyond the lines.

Experience, as well as necessity, had taught them more ways than one to penetrate the close cordon with which the vigilance of their enemies had sought to surround them. True, it was not accomplished very often, and was always attended with great risk.

"I have come to tell you, Mrs. Harvey," said Jennie, "that there is a paroled Confederate prisoner in town. He called to see us this morning, says he will be going up the Valley in a few days under flag of truce, and though he can't carry any letters, he wants to take as much information with him as possible."

"That is very fortunate," answered Mrs. Harvey, "as you have just received some important items."

"And I came this evening to ask your advice," answered Jennie. "Shall I entrust him with the contents of Jacob's last letter? He says he belongs to Stuart's Cavalry, and seems able to give a straight account of himself generally."

"I think you had better be on your guard, my dear child; they have so many spies," answered Mrs. Harvey, cautiously, and lowering her voice. "I'll tell you what to do. Ask him to call and see me to-morrow evening. If there is anything suspicious, I think I can discover it."

Jennie soon took her departure, and according to Mrs. Harvey's suggestion the paroled prisoner was invited to call the next evening, which he did, and impressed Mrs. Harvey quite as favorably as he had done Jennie. The sight of a grey uniform was so acceptable, and it was so delightful to once more have near them an object upon which to lavish the pent-up solicitude

and attention, which it was the custom of these people to bestow upon Confederate soldiers, that the fact of the unusual liberty accorded this particular one was lost sight of entirely. He had spent several days visiting among the different families with whom he had become acquainted, when Mrs. Harvey received a visit from Mrs. Grey.

"My dear friend," she said, with an ominous look, "I have come to warn you of the paroled Confederate that we have all been so glad to see and entertain."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Harvey, with a shocked expression, "what have you heard to excite your suspicions?"

"It must be between ourselves, you understand; but Captain King, one of the officers at my house, heard me mention him to-day, and after every one else had left the room he said, 'Mrs. Grey, I can not bear to see you imposed upon in the way you are by that man, and must tell you that he is a miserable spy. Of course,' he continued, 'it must not be known how you heard it, but *warn your friends*,' and then he left the room."

"It was certainly very kind of him," said Mrs. Harvey, "but I fear it is too late to save poor Jennie. She has already committed herself to him, I know. Let us go at once to see her," continued Mrs. Harvey, as she arose to get ready.

"Yes," said Mrs. Grey, as they started off together, "Captain King said that he thought there were some suspicious circumstances connected with her, which led to this method of detection."

"I remember now that he did call to see her first," said Mrs. Harvey; "I am afraid they have intercepted some of her letters, and are trying to find out from whom she gets her information. If that is the case, there is trouble in store for her, I fear."

After walking some distance they finally reached the Dwyers, and asking for Jennie, she was soon told the object of their visit. Her looks of dismay confirmed their fears.

"What shall I do, Mrs. Harvey?" she exclaimed; "I have told him everything that was in Jacob's last two letters, and he expected to leave here yesterday morning."

"Did you tell him from whom you received your information, Jennie?" asked Mrs. Harvey.

"O! no, ma'am; fortunately I did not do that, though he begged me to do so; and do you know, his anxiety to find out how I heard what I told him made me suspect for a moment that he must have a motive for it."

"The unscrupulous rascal!" said Mrs. Grey.

"And to think of our being so credulous," rejoined Mrs. Harvey.

"Well, he certainly knows a great deal about our army, if he does not belong to it," said Jennie; "he must have been among them a good deal."

"I don't doubt at all that he is a very successful spy," said Mrs. Harvey.

"If they should send me to prison, dear Mrs. Harvey," asked Jennie, presently, "won't you come sometimes and see my poor father and mother? It is the thought of being taken from them that disturbs me. It never occurred to me that the man was not what he seemed."

Mrs. Harvey and her friend soon took their departure, promising to call next day and learn of any new developments. Jennie knew that, even if what she feared was true, escape was impossible; so there was nothing to do but confront the danger that seemed imminent. She could not bring herself, however, to tell her father and mother of the state of affairs until she was certain that she had been involved.

The day wore slowly away, and evening came. Hearing nothing further from the affair, Jennie concluded to go out and see if she could possibly learn whether or not the paroled Confederate had left town, and called at several houses where he was known to have visited, but no one had seen him. She now

began to wonder if it might not be possible that Mrs. Harvey was mistaken in the identity of the party of whom she had been warned. Just as this reassuring reflection occurred to her, she turned a corner and encountered a brisk puff of wind, which relieved her of her veil and sent it flying through the air, until arrested by an officer who was approaching, and who politely returned it to her.

Jennie received it with a bow and thanks, little dreaming that the object of her inquiries and the cause of her apprehensions stood before her, so completely metamorphosed, however, as to defy recognition. Had she been less pre-occupied, she might have observed that it was not the first time during her walk that the same figure had passed her; and if she could have known that she had been under his surveillance since he had bidden her good-bye, in the garb of a Confederate two days previously, she would certainly not have returned home with the sense of relief which now possessed her. But she even felt inclined to laugh at the fears which had haunted her all day, as she sat in her father's sick room after tea, and recounted to her parents the day's experiences.

"My child, you risk too much; I told you not to trust that fellow, and I don't feel easy about you at all," said her mother.

"Ah, Virginny, you should ha' been born a boy and gone off with your brothers to the war. You are not contented to stay quietly with the old folks," said her father.

"I wish that Jacob would not always be sending you news; there's too much danger in it," added her mother.

"But the poor fellow can do nothing else now, and you know he has sent very valuable information South," said Jennie, in extenuation.

"Oh, yes, mother," said her father, "I suppose it is all right. I can do nothing, and we musn't hinder her; but I do feel very uneasy about you sometimes, my daughter," he said, turning to Jennie.

"Oh, no, father, dear," she said, laying her hand caressingly on his head; "I feel a faith that I will not get into any serious trouble."

She had not long, however, to indulge this faith, for, early on the following morning, an officer came with an order for her arrest. The courage of which she had boasted the previous evening seemed to "ooze from her finger-ends," and she stood with tightly-compressed lips as the order was read. She knew not what they might do to her, and was not positive that she would ever again look upon the dear, familiar faces from whom she was now to be separated. This was the thought that unnerved her. Upon going to her room to get ready, she threw herself upon her knees beside her bed and commended herself, as well as her parents, to her Father's care; then rising again, she felt anew the strength which for the moment had forsaken her.

Now, bidding them good-bye, she stepped into the ambulance, which had been sent for her, with a firm and unwavering tread, and was soon driven to the headquarters of the commanding officer.

The court of inquiry, into which she was at once ushered, were scarcely prepared for the fresh young face which now appeared before them, as Jennie took her seat and raised her eyes to the general with an inquiring look.

"For what am I summoned, sir, if you please?" she asked.

An officer arose and handed her two letters.

"Is that your handwriting?" he asked; and Jennie could not conceal the surprise she felt at thus receiving again the letters which she had sent out, about two weeks before, by the hand of a market-woman. There was no denying it—they were certainly her letters; one to Randolph, telling him that she had some information for him, which only awaited a reliable opportunity to be sent, and another to a friend on indifferent topics. She had carefully avoided signing any name to the first-men-

tioned, but her initials had been appended to the other, and the similarity of the handwriting had fixed them both upon her.

"Those are my letters," she answered, quite fearlessly; but she felt as if she was signing her own death-warrant.

"Will you be so kind as to tell me what information you expected to impart when a reliable opportunity presented itself?" asked the general, looking at her keenly.

"I can not do that, general. It is useless to ask me," she replied, resolutely.

"Well, if you can't tell me that, perhaps you will tell me from whom you received your information?"

"I am not at liberty to make that known, either," she said, calmly.

"Girl, do you know that I have the means to compel you to do so?" said he, growing excited.

"I do not know of any means that you can have, general, that will make me tell what will compromise another," said Jennie.

"Do you know, girl," said he, raising his voice to a high pitch, "that this Union *must* be preserved, and I *must* know how you got your information? We are fighting treason at the North as much as rebellion at the South, and I must know who the treacherous rascal is that is sending these bulletins from the very seat of government itself. Will you tell me?"

Now, Jennie knew that the paroled Confederate was indeed the thing he was accused of being. How else could they know that the information to which she made allusion in her letter had been received from Washington except through him? And a vision of Jacob in prison awaiting a worse fate arose before her, and she shuddered perceptibly as she answered again:

"I can not tell you, general."

"Very well; the consequences be upon your own head, obstinate girl! You will leave on the train for Washington this afternoon, and by night you will reach the 'Old Capitol'

prison, where you will remain until you agree to tell who the traitor is. If you persist in your folly, after you have had time for reflection, however, why the majesty of the law *must* be vindicated. The best government the world ever saw demands a victim, and you will be taken as a substitute for the friend you would shield."

He shook his finger in a menacing manner as he uttered these last words, while Jennie's anxious eyes appealingly sought the face of an officer who sat opposite and in whom we recognize Major Keyes.

He had seemed a sympathetic listener from the first, and now arose and left the room with the general. Presently, he returned, and they were left alone.

"My little lady," he said, kindly, approaching Jennie, "you are too young to go to prison, and if you will tell me from whom you got the information you tried to send through the lines you shall have large sums of money, and it shall never be known that you told me."

"You are very kind, sir," said Jennie, in a tearful voice, "to try to shield me, but nothing that you could name would tempt me to tell how I got the news that I tried to send South. I knew, of course, that I was running a great risk to do so, nor am I cowardly enough to plead either youth or ignorance. I trusted that I would not be found out, and would not have been if such an imposition had not been practiced upon me."

"If you will not be induced to tell, then, I am afraid that the general will deal harshly with you. Do you know the punishment usually inflicted on spies?" he added.

"I am not familiar with spies," she answered, "the only one I ever met being the wretch employed by your government to deceive and entrap the women of Winchester."

The officer looked surprised as she spoke.

"I am afraid your case is a hopeless one," he said, impatiently, and left the room.

The general now returned with another official whom she had not seen before.

"Take charge of this young lady," he said, "and deliver her up to the authorities at the Old Capitol as soon as possible."

"Can I not first tell my father and mother good-bye?" she asked, with a faltering voice, which she vainly tried to control.

"You may take her home for a few minutes, but remain with her all the time, and see that my orders are obeyed," he added, as he left the room.

The rapidly-rising tears would no longer be repressed. Her previous fortitude now forsook her, and she yielded to a wild burst of weeping. The astonished guard walked away to a distant window and beat a restless tattoo on the sill until the storm of grief had passed, then, looking nervously around, saw that Jennie had mastered her grief and was getting ready to accompany him.

He had been selected to fill this office, because of a stoicism and relentlessness which he had evinced on similar occasions, previously, but, for the first time in his experience, he felt a touch of sympathy at sight of this girlish grief, and he would readily have resigned this special detail for more dangerous service in the field.

Taking her to her father's, he allowed her an interview with her parents, alone, in total disregard of his orders, and Jennie whispered to her mother, in parting, to write and tell Jacob that she was in the Old Capitol, and she then felt sure that she could trust to his ingenuity to invent some means by which the violated law would be deprived of its victim.

CHAPTER XXII.

OCCURRENCES of a like harrowing nature had now become quite common, though such summary punishment was not reserved always for those who deserved it. In a majority of instances, the offenders, upon the smallest ground of suspicion, were picked up, without warning, and driven to a point just outside the Federal pickets, and set down by the roadside. Sometimes, entire families would fall under the ban; again, one member would be notified that they would be called for in half an hour, or less time, neither clothing nor provisions being allowed them.

"There is no telling what we may expect next," said Mrs. Grey to Mrs. Harvey. "It is a reign of terror, we not knowing what new whim may suggest itself to our tormentor."

"I feel so very sorry for the Dwyers, poor Jennie so young, too," said Mrs. Harvey. "We must look after the old people, indeed."

"Captain King very kindly told me," said Mrs. Grey, "that he, himself, would see that they did not suffer for anything in the way of provisions or fuel. He has it in his power to be very kind, and has proved in more ways than one that he means what he says."

Just then Belle and Carrie, who had been into the town, came in—both of them very much excited.

"Mother," said Belle, "they have sent the Longs beyond the lines. Only gave them an hour's notice, and, while Mrs. Long was getting into an ambulance in the front of the house, Mrs. Milroy was stepping from one at the side entrance."*

"Yes, indeed, aunt," said Carrie, as Belle paused to take a breath, "Milroy has established his headquarters there, and I

*Actual experience of Mr. Logan's family, of Winchester.

believe it was all a pretence about her little boy abusing one of the soldiers."

"And, even if it were true, is *that* a sufficient reason for banishing them from their beautiful home?" said Belle.

"You certainly must have been misinformed, girls, even Milroy would not be allowed to commit such a villainous act of tyranny," said Mrs. Harvey.

"Allowed! mother, did you say? Why, he most likely will be promoted and given a wider field for his despotism," said Belle, indignantly.

"Don't I hope that Jackson will capture him," said Mrs. Grey, "and, if he should, he ought to be turned over to the women of the Valley, for punishment."

"Rest assured, Mrs. Grey," answered Belle, "that he will never be captured. A man who takes such pleasure in persecuting non-combatants will never face the music of a battle-field."

"I thought Mary Long was sick in bed," continued Mrs. Harvey, still incredulous.

"So she was," said Carrie, "but they made her get up, and, in less than an hour from the time they were notified, an ambulance called for them."

"And Mary, sick though she was, was not permitted to carry a thing, not even the spoon with which she had been taking her medicine," added Belle.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE reader is, doubtless, anxious to learn something more of the brave young hero, who so nobly resisted the natural prompting of a grieved and disappointed heart, during the battle of Gaines' Mill.

Remaining with his command through all the battles around Richmond, and participating in the series of glorious victories, which distinguished the second summer of the war, even among the memorable campaigns in Northern Virginia, he seemed to bear a charmed life. For, rushing always into the thickest of the fray, he appeared to court the death which promised the only surcease of the sorrow that oppressed his manly heart.

During the fall of '62, he was sent on an important, but dangerous, mission, to the western part of the State. While there, he, with his command, was betrayed into the hands of the enemy, by a character known during the war as a "Jessie-scout." Though usually clad in Confederate grey, they were a very valued and efficient arm of the Federal service, almost the only requisites necessary for a faithful discharge of the duties required being a total want of conscience and a faded suit of grey cloth. From this unlucky field, he was carried a prisoner to Camp Chase, and there, surrounded by filth and disease, he languished for several months.*

Has it ever occurred to the reading public, that the reason there were so many more charges brought against the keepers of Southern prisons, than against those at the North, was because few Southern men survived the terrible experience? If we could but hear the testimony of the silent majority, who mingle their dust with a foreign soil, might not the weight of evidence be more evenly balanced?

*Actual experience of an officer of the "Laurel Brigade" (General Rosser's).

To be sure, the horrors of both Libby and Andersonville were great, but most of the inmates of those and other Southern prisons lived to tell the tale, and keep on telling it. But we all know that "dead men tell no tales."

The United States Government, itself, was the first to refuse an exchange; on its own head be the crime—if crime it be—of much of the suffering that was experienced by Federal soldiers in Southern prisons.

After enduring all the rigors of an untried climate, in addition to his hard prison life, Charlie embarked, by boat, for Vicksburg, along with a thousand other Confederates, who had been collected from different places, to be exchanged for an equal number of Federal soldiers.

As they neared Vicksburg, they found that an attack had been made on it by troops under Grant, which had been heavily repulsed. This state of affairs necessarily delayed the expected exchange, though promised from day to day. And the poor fellows were almost in despair at the end of three days, when the boat started back up the river. It was soon rumored among them that they were to return to prison, as Grant, fearing they would be put at once into the breastworks around Vicksburg, which he already found too well fortified, had decided not to exchange. As soon as this fact was fully realized by Charlie, he made up his mind that he would never return to Camp Chase.

"Rather," said he, "let me make one last, long plunge into the friendly waters of the Mississippi, than breathe the atmost phere of that foul den again."

And he set himself to work with several others to concoct some plan of escape. Various schemes suggested themselves, the boldest of which was to overpower their guard, take possession of the boat, and run her up into some one of the smaller rivers. The morning of the day appointed for this daring deed, however, they found that the guard had been doubled, and the crew and deck hands also armed. These extra precautions

proved that they had been betrayed, but, nothing daunted, they set to work to devise some other means, when they found that the boat had been ordered to land, to put ashore some small-pox and other patients.

Now, thought Charlie, is my chance, and calling two of his confederates aside told one of them to feign great illness, while he and the third one would volunteer to carry him ashore with the other sick.

The sick man played his part so well that they were allowed to carry him on shore uninterrupted and deposit him beside the other patients. Now they watched their chances and secreted themselves in the half-finished building which had been hastily converted into a hospital, and remained carefully concealed until the welcome sound of the plashing waters told them that the boat had left the shore.

As soon as she was well out into the river, they came from their hiding-place into full view, and struck up the "Bonny Blue Flag." Their song of exultation drew not only the attention of the officers on board, but several shots besides. They fell harmless, however, as they were fired at long range, and as soon as their ill friend had joined them, which he did very soon after the boat left, having recovered in a miraculously short space of time, they turned their faces inland, in search of some shelter for the night, which was rapidly approaching.

With nothing to eat, no human habitation in sight, and only a general idea of the topography of the country around them, their condition was not to be envied. They now made their way through the tangled undergrowth with great difficulty, and the rapidly-fading twilight furnished them with little encouragement, until the darkness finally became impenetrable.

Soon the howling of hungry wolves was heard in the distance, and they knew that to kindle a fire as quickly as possible was their only safeguard.

"Is there a match in the party?" asked Charlie.

Every pocket was searched to its depths and two or three produced, but the dampness which had been communicated from their wet clothing rendered them useless. Now they commenced rubbing sticks together, but they were affected by dampness, too, or else their faith was weak, for, after repeated trials, this, also, was abandoned. Meanwhile, the roaring of the beasts of prey grew louder and nearer, and they knew that their ability to kindle a fire was the single prospect that offered any protection, and in desperation they concluded to institute another search. This time two or three caps were produced, but the same cause that rendered the matches useless also affected these. Finally, after again searching every nook and corner, Charlie was rewarded by finding a pistol-cap between the lining and outside of his coat, snugly embedded in the lint and tobacco that had accumulated in this undisturbed retreat, consequently it was perfectly dry. Tearing a piece of his shirt in shreds, he surrounded the cap with it, and now striking a firm blow, the welcome spark shone out amid the darkness like a beacon-light to the storm-tossed mariner.

To feed the feeble flame was no easy task, even now that it was started, as all the underbrush was damp from recent floods. It was only by climbing trees and getting the dryest twigs that it could be kept burning at all, and so elated were they at their success in this enterprise as to entirely lose sight of the fact that they had no prospect for any supper. All through the long night they slept, and kept their vigils alternately, but the weary darkness finally waned and the welcome daylight dawned at last.

Exhausted and hungry they now took up their line of march in search of a human habitation. After traveling some distance they were rewarded by finding some negro cabins, whose inmates showed them every kindness, and directed them to the house of their master, not very far away, who proved to be a friend of Charlie's father. Here they rested for several days very gladly, when the little party separated, and Charlie set out once more

for his command. He had learned from the papers that Jackson was again with Lee's army, before Richmond, and having neither horse nor arms he knew it would be necessary to go there to furnish himself with both.

It was a smiling morning in the early part of May when he reached the Confederate capital, the season when Richmond puts on her most becoming dress. The clustering crepe-myrtle embowers a window in almost every dwelling, while the stately magnolia, with its large, fragrant flowers and glossy green leaves, also finds a friendly soil, and contributes largely to the general beauty of the city. "As he treads once more his native heath," surrounded by familiar scenes and faces, the turbulent, restless longing which has, for months, possessed Charlie's breast, is in a measure calmed, as he reflects that he breathes once more the same atmosphere of her he loves, although forbidden, alas! to bask in the sunshine of her presence.

"Forget her! would God I could; if she had only tried to deceive me I might, but she has ever been truthful. I, alone, have deceived myself."

"But I must hear something of her, if I can not see her," he said to himself, as he wended his way to the Department of the Treasury, where his friend, Major Hughes, was now employed.

"Why, Charlie, old boy," said Major Hughes, advancing to meet him, "did you drop from the clouds?"

"Well, not exactly," he answered, as he shook hands with his friend, "but I don't think I could feel more used up if I had."

"You do look badly, my dear fellow—have lost both flesh and color"—he answered, as he examined him critically.

"If six months in Camp Chase does not reduce a man and change his color, he must belong to the Bronze Brigade," said Charlie.

"But tell me, pray, how you got here," continued his friend; "I thought the order for the exchange had been recalled."

"So it was," said Charlie, "and just as we had reached the

promised land, too; but several of us made our escape. It was a choice between Scylla and Charybdis, but we made a bold leap." Then followed a detailed account of his escape and subsequent hardships. "Here I am, though, at last," he added, "ready to pitch into them with greater vim than ever, and I hereby swear that I will never be taken alive again. But enough of myself. Tell me what has been going on in Richmond?"

"We have passed through a very gay winter, notwithstanding the blockade—parties innumerable, besides brilliant levees at the President's now and then. To be sure, there are no large, expensive entertainments; but the young people will have a good time, you know," answered Hughes, laughing.

"Have you seen Randolph lately?" queried Charlie.

"Yes; he was in town last week and called to see me. He was camped out near Ashland then; had just had letters from the Valley giving accounts of the way Milroy is treating the citizens. He is anxious to go there, I assure you," said Hughes.

"Confound Milroy and everybody else! Hughes, don't you know that I want to hear about some one else a great deal more than Milroy or even Randolph? Why do you tantalize me so?"

"Why didn't you ask me at first, then, like an honest fellow, and not beat about the bush like you are doing?" he said.

"Well, where is she, and when did you see her?" asked Charlie, eagerly.

"That is a pretty question," said Hughes; "how in the thunder do I know who you mean?"

"You know well enough, and are a sorry fellow to treat me so," answered Charlie, impatiently.

"Well, I will do better now. I saw her yesterday evening on Franklin street. I try to find time to show myself out there for a little while every evening. My health demands some recreation, you know, and I find that it saves time, as I see most of the beauties during my walk, that being the popular promenade."

"She is well, then, at least," said Charlie.

"O! I suppose so; such destructive creatures generally are," answered Hughes; "but, Charlie, I really hoped you had gotten over that infatuation; that girl can't appreciate you."

"Allow me to judge for myself, if you please," said Charlie, coolly.

It was in a spirit of the kindest consideration for his friend that Hughes had treated the subject so lightly, hoping thereby to divert Charlie from it; but failing in the first, he thought he would try another plan.

"You know, I suppose, that her Yankee lover has been to see her. He was wounded and captured at Gaines' Mill, but as soon as he was well enough he got paroled and sought out his lady love."

"How did she receive him?" asked Charlie, anxiously.

"Humph! very graciously, I imagine."

Then followed a recital of his own adventure on the occasion of their drive.

"He did not remain long after McClellan was reinstated, however, and I heard that he was exchanged. At any rate, he disappeared," added Hughes.

"Did her parents know of his visit?" asked Charlie, eagerly.

"That I can't find out, but I hardly think they could have done so," replied his friend.

"How does she look, Hughes—happy?" he asked, sadly.

"Happy? I don't know, Charlie. She ought not to, but she is as beautiful as ever, confound her, and moves like an iron-clad in deep water. Meet me here this evening at five o'clock, and we will walk up Franklin street together. Are you brave enough for that, old boy?"

"No, Hughes, I couldn't go this evening, but to-morrow at that hour you may expect me; that is, I think you may; but for the present I'll bid you good evening."

CHAPTER XXIV.

AT five o'clock the following evening Charlie presented himself at Hughes' place of business. Trusting to the suddenness of his return to Richmond, as well as to his changed appearance, he hoped to pass incog. for awhile among his acquaintances. A brisk walk soon brought them to the favorite promenade, and before long they were lost in the gay throng which swept ceaselessly past.

"Here she comes," exclaimed Hughes, presently.

And Charlie's heart, which had never quailed in front of the foe, now almost ceased to beat, as the proud head bowed in passing and the music of her voice fell on his ear. Both saw that Charlie was unrecognized at first, but as he replaced his hat which he had lifted in passing they felt rather than saw that Pauline turned her head and looked after them.

"She *must* have recognized you, Charlie," said Hughes.

"I must have one more glimpse of her as she returns," said Charlie, with the desperation of a drunkard who would drink to the depths his cup of debauch before signing the pledge to abstain.

"Let us step into this drug store," said his friend; "it will furnish us with a good point of observation."

They had not long to wait, for presently she returned, and seemed to be eagerly scanning every face that passed her, scarce heeding the words of her companion, and now they felt convinced that Charlie had been recognized.

"I will go now, Hughes," said he; "come on."

"Will you not call on her at all, Charlie?" he asked.

"Never," said Charlie; "I never want to see her again;

"'If she be not fair for me,
What care I how fair she be?'

I shall go back to camp to-morrow, and don't care much what becomes of me."

"Are you going to be that kind of a lubber, Charlie Holmes? I thought you had more pluck. There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out, old fellow; and besides, a girl that could love a Yankee, when there are so many distinguished looking Confederates around—well, she has very bad taste, to say the least," said Hughes, in a bantering tone.

"Hughes, I could have killed that fellow Appleton at the battle of Gaines' Mill if I had chosen. I captured him;" and Charlie recounted the circumstances, which Hughes heard now for the first time.

"I shall never have any respect for you again, Holmes, to miss such an opportunity," said Hughes.

"You know you would have done the same, under the same circumstances, Hughes," said Charlie.

"Never in the world, my boy; that's what I call flying in the face of Providence, throwing a fellow's chances away like that. You don't deserve to win her, 'pon my soul, you don't," said Hughes, with energy.

"Well, what is done is done, and I certainly don't regret it," said Charlie, "I very often feel that I won't survive the war, anyhow."

"Why, Holmes, I never expected to hear you go on so. Would you let a foolish girl, who is not worth your little finger, make you so despondent?" he asked.

"Miss Pauline is not altogether responsible, my friend, I have had that presentiment for some time, but it makes no difference."

"Cheer up, old fellow, and go with me to-night. I will show you some girls worth talking about, will you not?" asked Hughes.

"Thank you, but I won't inflict myself on any one to-night, you will have to excuse me," answered Charlie.

Here their paths diverging, they separated, and the day fol-

lowing Charlie bent his energies in providing himself with a horse and other necessary equipments, preparatory to returning to his command. For one brief day he had indulged in the resurrection of a buried memory and had reveled in the passing glimpses of her who was lost to him forever. Now again the image which haunted him must be heroically put aside, and her injunction of forgetfulness obeyed to the letter! Yes, he *would* forget her.

He joined his command again, on the eve of the battle of Chancellorsville, in time to participate in the glorious victory, as well as to share in the general grief that was occasioned by the death of Stonewall Jackson soon after; whose name will ever be a synonym of all that is grand in man or glorious in a soldier.

The once beautiful Valley of Virginia, now desecrated and despoiled, would no more welcome back the victorious chieftain, who had so often chased the foe from her firesides. Never again would he march with exultant tread through waving flags and songs of victory, which had always greeted his triumphal entry into Winchester.

The citizens there, hearing of his death first through Northern papers, refused for some time to credit it, thinking it another invention of the ingenious brain of Milroy, to add to their torture. But alas! the sad certainty was soon realized, and his death mourned as that of a dear, familiar friend, so often a deliverer from their enemies. Their patient endurance was almost exhausted as the dreary months rolled by, and although the spring campaign had opened, the enemy still oppressed them. They watched eagerly for any indication of evacuation, and before very long were rewarded.

An unusual activity one morning among the troops in and around Winchester indicated that a change of some sort was contemplated. Sure enough, the "underground railroad" brought news down the Valley of the advance of their deliverers, and on the morning of the 16th of June the town was abandoned,

and General Milroy withdrew his troops to the fort on the north side of the place.

During the entire day, and most of the night, an unceasing fire was kept up over the heads of the anxious citizens.

"Oh! how earnestly I hope that Milroy may be captured," said Belle.

"I am perfectly willing to leave him in the hands of the Lord, my child," said her mother.

"You may depend upon it, he won't be captured," said Carrie, "there is no such good luck."

"He will save the Lord the trouble by taking care of himself, you think, Carrie," said Mrs. Grey, laughing.

"Captain King came to tell us good-bye, this morning," said Belle, "and I found it impossible to say that I was sorry to part with him, though he has certainly been a very kind friend."

"Indeed, he is one of nature's noblemen, Belle," rejoined Mrs. Grey, "the citizens of this neighborhood have more reason than they dream of for gratitude to him. While entirely loyal to the cause of the Union, he is at the same time so imbued with a keen sense of justice and humanity, that no promise of favor or reward would make him countenance or take part in the petty persecutions that have characterized the military reign here this winter, and, bad as things have been, I believe they would have been much worse, but for his interference on many occasions."

"It was a great pity for the citizens that Cluseret was not left in command," said Mrs. Harvey, "he seemed inclined to treat the people like human beings, too. He sent me a guard directly I asked for it, though to be sure, I didn't ask until all the fencing had been carried off and most of the out-buildings torn down."

"They certainly didn't give you much time," added Belle, for Colonel Hayes'* regiment had converted the lumber into a small village a few hours after they took possession, and the guard didn't really do much good after all."

"How do you know that they would not have torn the house

*R. B. Hayes, afterward President of the United States.

down, if the guard had not arrived?" asked Mrs. Harvey. "I am sure they have not left one stone upon another at 'Selma;'* they even came to borrow my wheelbarrow to haul some of the stones to their camp," she added, laughing.

"I think the most remarkable feature of the request, mother, was, that it should have been a request at all, as they usually help themselves to whatever they want without asking," said Belle.

"I didn't give them special credit for politeness on this occasion," answered her mother, "for I happened to know that they had already searched the premises before making the request, neither did I satisfy them by confessing that it had already been stolen, but just said that they must be demented to suppose that I would aid in hauling my friend's house away."

"Well, what did Milroy do about the guard?" asked Mrs. Grey, "you have forgotten to tell me that"

"Well," she continued, "the first thing he did after taking command was to have the guard removed, because, as he said, we did not deserve the protection of the best government, etc., you know the rest, I am sure."

"Indeed, I have heard it often enough this winter"—answered Mrs. Grey; "by the way," she added, "Captain King told me that Jennie had escaped from the Old Capitol, had you heard of it?"

"Yes, indeed," said Belle, "and we went right to her home to tell her father and mother. I wish you could have seen their joy, though her poor old father said: 'I always felt that Virginny would get away from them;' indeed, he thinks she bears a charmed life."

"I was not at all surprised to hear it either," said Mrs. Harvey, "she is full of resources and as quick-witted as possible."

"The life we lead here is well calculated to sharpen our wits," said Belle, laughing." "I think another winter of it would wreck my faith in humanity entirely, don't you, Carrie?"

*The former home of the Hon. James M. Mason, for many years Senator from Virginia, and during the war, Confederate Commissioner to England.

"I do, indeed," rejoined Carrie, "we have quite come to the conclusion, dear aunt, that nothing short of a winter in Richmond will quite restore our confidence in our kind again."

"I think it very likely that you will have the opportunity to test it, my dear, as I could not calmly contemplate another winter like the one through which we have just passed. Your uncle positively forbids my remaining within the enemy's lines again."

The desultory shelling which had kept up over their heads during the day almost ceased as night came on, and on the hills to the south could be seen an occasional camp-fire, which told, unmistakably, of the near approach of their deliverers. Sure enough, early on the following morning it was rumored that, by a masterly flank movement, the Confederates had gotten into their rear and captured the entire command during the night, but it was not credited long, as the volleys of musketry which were heard rattling in quick succession, not far away, told a different tale, and the anxious citizens knew the end was not yet.

As was predicted, Milroy deserted his men in the middle of the night, and, with a picked band for his own body-guard, rivaled John Gilpin in his race to Washington City. Such, at least, was said to be the fact by Federal prisoners, who were soon brought back by the thousand, and, as they marched through the streets to the tune of "Dixie," a bevy of ladies on the sidewalk caught up the chorus, and presently the soldiers joining in, carried it along the line in both directions, making the heavens fairly ring with this joyous song of welcome and triumph. The prisoners looked in perfect amazement at the throngs of citizens on the streets which they had been accustomed to see almost deserted, and also observed Confederate flags flaunting from windows of houses, which they had searched in vain, for such evidences of treason and disloyalty.

"Great heavens!" one exclaimed, "it is worth being captured to witness such a reception; no wonder the Rebels fight like devils."

CHAPTER XXV.

FOR the second time it had been decided to carry the war into the enemy's country. This army of victorious veterans was again to cross the Potomac, and the prosaic territory around the hills of Gettysburg was to be made sadly historic for all time. They little dreamed, as they trod the earth so proudly in their threadbare suits of grey, that the victory, which their confidence almost assured, would be purchased by such heavy drafts on their best resources.

The commands to which Randolph and Charlie Holmes were attached went into camp near Winchester, and hospitable old Belmont was again the rendezvous for our friends. Charlie met with a warm reception, and was made to recite, again and again, the story of his capture and escape. The hard service and many privations, though, were beginning to tell on all parties.

"I doubt very much the wisdom of this policy," said Mrs. Harvey; "I fear that this carrying the war into the enemy's country will not prove as beneficial as is hoped by many."

"I expect the urgent necessity for supplies of all kinds renders it almost imperative, Mrs. Harvey," answered Randolph; "the troops have been on half-rations now for some time, but we hope shortly to capture a great many things that we need."

"I am afraid, though, that Lee will not conduct the war on the right principle," said Charlie; "we should carry the black flag, and fight the enemy with his own weapons."

"No, Lee will not let us do anything that is not strictly in accordance with the most approved principles of modern warfare," said John, "and I don't know but what he is right, after all.'

"Uncle Bob ought to go to Camp Chase for awhile," said Charlie; "he would modify his scruples somewhat, I think."

"I think Camp Chase, or something else, has had a bad effect on you, Charlie," said Belle, laughing, "you are not as amiable as you once were."

"I believe I am becoming a little morose, Miss Belle, but you must excuse me to-night; as Sambo says, I am 'powerful tired.' May be, in the morning, I shall be in a better humor," said Charlie."

"By the way," asked Belle, turning to Randolph, "how is Sambo?"

"Very well, and the most delighted fellow you ever saw, at getting back to the Valley again. His countenance fell though perceptibly when he heard that 'Miss Susing' had gone off with the Yankees," said John.

"Yes," answered Belle, "I think he fondly imagined that Susan would await his return."

"Poor fellow, he had not known as many Susans as his master," said Randolph, in an injured tone, to Belle.

At this speech Belle turned from John to Charlie again, showing unconsciously a little resentment.

"Did you see any of my friends in Richmond, Charlie?" she asked.

"I was only there for two or three days, Miss Belle," answered Charlie, evasively, "and in such a dilapidated condition that I made few visits, only remaining long enough to equip myself for camp again. I saw a good deal of my friend Hughes."

"I used to pity that fellow when he first lost his arm," said Randolph, "but see what he earned by it, a nice soft place in Richmond and no more danger of getting hurt, and when the war is over he will settle down comfortably with the girl of his choice, while we poor devils, most likely, will be adorning a niche in history."

"A hopeful prospect you predict, I declare," said Charlie, "but it is quite natural to suppose that the fair sex in the South

will largely preponderate and that the lucky fellows who survive will do their own 'pickin' and choosin'.'"

"I think you do your countrywomen cruel injustice," said Belle, quite warmly, and thinking of the fair girl who still mourned for her brother she added, "to suppose that they would not remain true to a buried memory."

As she repeated the last words, Charlie arose abruptly and walked to the farthest part of the room. The words she spoke had fallen upon his ear with a different meaning from what she had intended, but they stirred a host of recollections within his manly breast, and he presently left the room.

"What a pity that fellow has such a great big, tender heart," said Randolph. "Something has been said that reminded him of the girl that he is trying to banish from his thoughts. I am sure of it."

"Do you know whether he saw Pauline in Richmond, Mr. Randolph?" inquired Belle. "I felt a hesitation in asking him, although I have not heard from her all winter."

"I believe he saw her on the street only," said Randolph, showing no inclination to enter into any details. "It makes me real mad to know that girl has the power to make Charlie suffer as he does."

"Now, Mr. Randolph," she answered, smiling incredulously, "I am beginning to be a little bit skeptical about that. I believe Charlie fancies himself very much in love with Pauline, and I suppose he is, but he will get over it after awhile. A very wise man has said, and one who knew well his sex, that: 'Men have died and worms have eaten them, but not from love.'"

"I suppose I shall never be able to convince you of man's superior constancy," said Randolph, with a sigh of regret.

"I didn't know that you had ever tried," answered Belle, mischievously.

"Why do you persist in misunderstanding me, Miss Belle?" said Randolph, earnestly. "Why are you so gentle and kind

to every one else but me, when I of all others would most appreciate it?"

Mrs. Harvey, just then returning, put an end to their conversation, which now became general, until they separated for the night.

When they returned to their quarters, Randolph found Sambo dozing over the camp-fire, having first arranged as comfortable a bed for his master as it was possible to make of fence rails and a few blankets. All felt that the advance into Pennsylvania was a settled thing, and the order for the move was hourly expected.

On the following morning, Sambo came to his master, and, with a half serious, half comical expression, said to him:

"Mas' John."

Randolph, who was writing, looked up inquiringly, "Well, Sam, what is it?"

But Sam only grinned in reply.

"Do you want to go to the Yankees? You have my consent, if you do, though I should grieve to part with you, old fellow," said his master, affectionately.

"Laws, no, Mas' John, I doesn't want to go wid de Yanks; I never wants to see no mo' Yanks, 'ceptin' dey's dead ones; dey has done me all de harm now dat dey could."

"Why, what in the world is the matter, Sam, tell me?"

"Mas' John," he began, looking very sheepish, "you never knowed how much I did think o' Miss Susing; I never knowed myse'f, tell I got back and foun' she done gone wid de Yanks. Arter all I done tole her, too."

"Is that so, Sam? I am sorry for you, but you have much to learn yet. Take your master's advice, and put not your trust in females; they will torment you to death, if they think you care anything about them. Love 'em as much as you choose, but never let 'em know it, if you value your peace of mind at all."

"I's done los' my *piece* o' mind, entirely, Mas' John," said

Sam, with a woe-begone look. "Couldn't I—would you mind writin' me a letter, to let her know how bad she have used me?"

"I will write the letter for you, certainly, Sam, if it will comfort you at all," said his master, in sympathetic tones, "but how will you get it to her?"

"Dinah say she kin send it for me, sah," answered Sam, brightening up.

"Very well, I will write at once," said John, getting ready. "Now," he added, presently, "what shall I say?"

"Laws, Mas' John, I never writ no letter; you jes tell how I feels about her goin' off, en how I hopes she will come back," he answered.

"Shall I begin, 'Dearest Miss Susan;' will that suit you?"

"O, yes, sah, dat's fine. I takes my pen in hand," continued Sam, with sudden inspiration.

"O, no, Sam; think of something more touching, like the beginning," said John.

"Dat a fack," said Sam, intelligently scratching his head. "Well, I seats myself to pen a few lines."

"Sam, I believe I find the same objection to that form of expression, also; it seems almost too tame for the occasion. How will this do? 'My poor heart is almost breaking.'"

"Dem's de berry words, Mas' John," he exclaimed, with delight.

"I can with difficulty," continued Randolph, "express my grief at finding you gone."

"Dat's right, dat's right," interposed Sam.

"I had really hoped that my words of warning would prevent your trusting to the false promises held out by the treacherous Yankees," read Randolph, as he wrote.

"Dem's de berry words, Mas' John. Ef dey don't fotch her back, nothin' will. Go on wid some mo' like dat."

"Why, Sambo," said his master, in a surprised tone; "do you really hope to bring her back?"

"Don't you think dey is no hope?" asked Sam, with apprehension.

"It is beautiful to contemplate such a sublime exhibition of faith," said Randolph, aside, and rolling his eyes heavenward. "It is touching." Then, turning to Sam again, "I hope you may not be disappointed, Sam, but don't set your heart on it too much."

"Mas' John," said he, suddenly dropping his voice to a confidential tone, "doesn't you think a heap o' Miss Belle?"

"What in the thunder has that got to do with your letter, you rascal? What else shall I say?" said John, laughing in spite of himself.

"Dat am de fack, Mas' John, but it 'pears to me as how *somebody* has been a doin' o' *you* scan'lous."

"Well, never mind about that now, Sam," he answered, and, writing on, "How will this do, now?" he asked, presently, and read:

"'And now I am left broken-hearted, to mourn your loss, and refuse to be comforted. Will you not return to your faithful Sambo?

"'Who is ever true,
And who waits for you
With a loving heart,
'Till death us do part.'"

Sam's countenance was radiant, particularly as Randolph read the rhyme, which closed it.

"It's splendid, Mas' John, I has great hope o' Miss Susing, when she git dat. Jes' back it, now, en I'll carry it to Dinah."

"Well," said John, placing it in an envelope, "now, what is the name, Miss Susan—what?"

"I 'clar', Mas' John, I forgits. Miss Susing—Miss Susing," he repeated to himself, and, scratching his head with energy, as he vainly tried to remember another name. "'Pon my soul, I never knowed no more. I'll ask Dinah," and off he went.

On the day following, who should make her appearance at

Belmont, but Jennie, leaning proudly on the arm of her beloved Jacob. Her face was radiant with delight, as she said :

"We knew you would rejoice with us, my dear Mrs. Harvey, at reaching home once more, so we have come to bring the good news, ourselves."

"We are, indeed, delighted, dear Jennie, to welcome you back again, as well as to meet this source of all your troubles," said Mrs. Harvey, laughing and shaking hands with Jennie first and then Jacob.

"But to him, also, I owe my escape, Mrs. Harvey," said Jennie, quickly, and looking fondly at Jacob.

Carrie and Belle now joined them, and, after cordial greetings, begged to hear an account of how she had gotten away.

"I expect you were a good deal excited when you first heard of Jennie's imprisonment, Mr. Wilder," said Mrs. Harvey.

"I reckon I was about as near crazy as a man could well be, Mrs. Harvey," he answered, "particularly as it was to shield me; but of course I made up my mind at once that if I could not release her I would give myself up and confess it all," he added in lower tones. "But we have some mighty good friends in Washington, Mrs. Harvey. There are some warm Southern sympathizers there. The Sisters of Charity, especially, have done a heap of good among the prisoners. Just as soon as I heard that Jennie was in the Old Capitol, I spent all my spare time walking around in the neighborhood trying to think of some good way to get her out. I noticed several days in succession that a certain sister visited the prison regularly at the same hour, and I decided to try and enlist her sympathies in Jennie's behalf.

"I was puzzled a good deal, though, to know how to go about it, as I was not certain what her sentiments were. Finally I determined to put a bold face on the matter, so the next time I saw her coming I went bravely up and told her that I had noticed her going in several times, and I felt interested because

I had a very dear friend inside those walls, and then I asked if she would carry a note to her for me. This she agreed to do, and glancing at the address as I handed it to her, smiled kindly and said she knew the young lady, and added 'that her extreme youth and,' I won't say what else, had attracted and interested her very much.

"I felt now that I could safely count on her assistance, so when Jennie's answer came telling me that I could talk unreservedly to the dear, good sister, I lost no time in telling her that I was bent on releasing Jennie, and hoped she would assist me; but she shook her head and said she could not do so. Then I took her into my confidence further, and told her the danger that threatened us both, and begged that she would bring Jennie a suit like the one which she herself wore. After a great deal of begging she at last agreed to do so, and by bringing one piece at a time she soon furnished her the outfit.

"I knew that Jennie would not want for courage to wear it when the time came, so I found out the hour when the guard was mounted, and sent her instructions accordingly.

"At the appointed time I posted myself where I could see without being seen, and watched developments with breathless interest. Sure enough, just after the old clock in the church tower near had struck five (though it seemed fifty then), the signal agreed upon, I saw an outside door open and a little nun pass boldly through, and right out by the old soldier on duty, as if she had been going in and out every day for two years."

"I tell you my heart was in my mouth, though, for all I walked so straight," interposed Jennie.

"She then turned to the right, as I had written her to do," continued Jacob, "and I soon made my appearance, though I didn't join her till we had gone some distance.

"Having gotten possession of her once more," continued Jacob, proudly, "I soon persuaded her to give me the right to keep it, and so we bent our steps to the home of the kind sister

who had so befriended us. After explaining matters to her, she went with us to the priest, and from him I've got the right to protect and care for her evermore."

At this announcement they all gathered around the blushing bride to offer their congratulations.

"How very romantic!" exclaimed Carrie; "but tell us, Jennie," she added, "how you got through the lines again."

"Well, we had a time of it, I assure you. We had to go down in the country on the Potomac, below Washington, and watch our chances, and it was several days before we managed to get a boat, though we found kind friends who harbored and helped us in many ways. I tell you it was a proud moment when I put my foot on dear old Virginia soil once more. Besides ourselves, there were two soldiers who had made their escape from Fort McHenry, and our feet had scarcely touched the shore when we struck up 'There's life in the old land yet,' and I tell you we made the welkin ring."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEN Appleton returned from his captivity in Richmond he went at once back to his old position and remained with McClellan until he was again superseded after the battle of Antietam. Feeling then that his services might be dispensed with, he succeeded in getting a leave of absence, and lost no time in returning to his friends in Philadelphia. On all sides he saw evidences of prosperity and growing wealth. The war was scarcely talked of, and only through the papers now and then did he hear of a battle. Many of his old friends were in their accustomed places, and the business of commerce and trade was in pretty much the same condition as before the war, only a little brisker, while many had grown fat on Government contracts.

"Why shouldn't I resign?" thought Appleton, who had not gotten his full consent to the step, notwithstanding Pauline's partial promise. "If those who have not fought at all enjoy this immunity, why may not I? At least," he continued to muse, "I might get a substitute."

That the war was really waged to liberate the negro became more and more apparent. The tone of the press and the action of the Government toward those organs which did not uphold its policy all combined to convince him that what he had considered a prejudiced opinion on the part of Pauline was really the truth, and his mind was soon made up. Indignation, too, at the injustice done his commanding officer had somewhat cooled the ardor of his patriotism. Sending in his resignation, he lost no time, after its acceptance, in providing a substitute. He then wrote Pauline the following letter:

"At last, dearest Pauline, my resignation has been accepted, and I shall shortly leave here for Washington to await, with what anxiety you

can imagine, your answer to this. Can it be that you have already repented your half-made promise? Do not, I beseech you, disappoint me now, when the happiness for which I long seems so nearly within my grasp. Let *nothing* prevent your coming to me, darling, and it shall be my life-long privilege to prevent any occasion ever arising which may make you regret the step I now urge.

"I am more convinced than ever that the fate I predicted is in store for the South, and that it is, indeed, but a question of time. It is to the advantage of numbers who have grown rich on the war to keep it up, and there is no lack of resources. How anxious I feel to remove you from the possibility of sharing the many privations which must shortly be borne by the brave people of your section. If the Southern States had only have revolted against the usurpations of the Government under the constitution and in the Union, how much better off they would have been to-day.

"But I forget myself, when but one hope really animates me, and that is to have you once more near, that I may call you mine irrevocably and forever.

"Do not, darling, I beseech you, say nay to my prayer. I shall wait your answer in an agony of suspense. Farewell.

ED APPLETON."

Pauline did not receive this letter for some time after it was written, as it was sent by a very circuitous route. She had, in the meantime, confided to her mother the secret of the love which she had been betrayed into confessing. This, while relieving Mrs. Rhett of a great cause of anxiety, inasmuch as it explained many things which had puzzled her, did not surprise nor distress her the less.

Pauline was their one daughter, and the petted idol of both parents, and now when they found how far affairs had progressed between them, and how deeply her affections seemed involved, all idea of opposition was out of the question. Mrs. Rhett knew, too, that her only hope lay in complete acquiescence to Pauline's imperious will.

After reading Appleton's letter she said to Pauline:

"After a grave discussion with your father, my daughter, we have decided to allow you to take your own pleasure in this mat-

ter. It is certainly unfortunate that you allowed your affections to become thus entangled, but we have decided to give our consent, especially as Colonel Appleton has resigned his commission and will take you abroad. Of course, you must know that you are cutting yourself off from all your old associations and friends, but if what he offers is full compensation, why then, I suppose it is all right."

Mrs. Rhett had made a great effort to appear calm while speaking to her daughter, and endeavored, in her unselfish mother-love, to keep out of sight any feeling which she might have in the matter, but it overwhelmed her like a great wave toward the last, and the tears rained down her face. Pauline, spoiled child though she was, could not look on unmoved, but, coming up to her, wound her arms about her mother's neck, and laying her head on her shoulder, they mingled their tears together.

"It may turn out, dear child, better than I now see any cause to hope for," said her mother, at last; "God grant that it may!"

"I know you will feel differently toward him, mother, when you see him; he is different from every one else, and then he loves me so fondly, besides, too, you have always wanted me to go abroad, you know," said Pauline, brightening up again.

"He is one of a large majority, Pauline, who have brought untold evils upon our poor, distracted land," said her mother, seriously.

"But you know, mother, that he has resigned, and will not enter the army again, he has promised me," she answered.

"Yes, I admit," answered her mother, "that that is some amelioration of the evil."

"Mother, dear, do not speak of it as an evil," said Pauline, in tones of distress, "I am sure it was only the accident of birth which made him espouse the cause of the Union; if he had been born and bred in the South, Edward Appleton would have been as enthusiastic a rebel as the most rebellious among us."

Elated, as well as surprised at her success in gaining the con-

sent of her parents to her union with Appleton, Pauline hastened to answer the already long-delayed letter.

"I hope you have not thought that either indifference or coldness has caused me to delay answering the letter from you, which certainly merited an earlier reply.

"I can not tell you *all* on paper, but this much I may impart: My father and mother give their consent, and I shall anxiously await your advent in Richmond. Until then, good-bye,

"PAULINE."

The next flag of truce brought an answer to this, a hastily-written letter from Appleton, who had been hurriedly summoned to the sick bed of his father, "but as soon as possible, would come to Richmond, to the ends of the earth, if necessary, to find my beloved," were the concluding words.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE policy of invasion, as was feared by many, had been postponed until too late to be productive of much benefit, and back again marched the battle-scarred veterans, those of them, at least, who had not been left lifeless on the gory heights of Gettysburg, or maimed and crippled in the enemy's hands.

They had marched an orderly, well-disciplined army, through a country owned by an enemy, that had pillaged, burned, and laid waste the fairest land under the sun, their own homes and firesides. Private property had been invariably respected, except in rare instances, and no orders were issued which would require the feathered tribe even, to seek their rations elsewhere, as was the case when Sheridan made his way through the Valley of Virginia.

Once more they recrossed the Potomac and camped again on the shores they had defended so long and so valiantly. Their line of march again lay through Winchester, and, as was usual, whenever "the army" passed through, the citizens of every age and condition thronged the streets, to cheer and encourage their brave defenders.

Mrs. Harvey, Belle, and Carrie, with several other ladies, were standing on a corner of the street as Hill's corps came up before them, and turning at the opposite corner, passed to their right. They all observed an acquaintance, Dr. C——, who in attempting to cross over to them got caught just at the angle by the passing throng. Recognized presently by a friend in the ranks, as he waited to cross, he was accosted and warmly shaken by the hand.

"How d'ye do, doctor?" said the soldier. But no sooner was his hand dropped than it was caught up again by the one behind,

and the same salutation greeted him, then the next, and so on, until nearly the entire corps had passed.

At the first break, the doctor made a bold dash, and rushed over to where the ladies were standing, who by this time were laughing heartily at his vain efforts to extricate himself from his unusual predicament.

He came up hugging his arm, as if it were out of joint. Each of the party extended a hand at once.

"How d'ye do, doctor?"

"Thank you, I don't do at all, to shake hands, at least; I believe my arm is broken," he continued, with a lugubrious countenance. "Confound those fellows; there I had been standing, watching them pass, and pitying their bare-foot, half-clad condition, and 'pon my soul, they are as full of life and fun, as if they were sleek and prosperous."

"It is wonderful, indeed, to see their spirits under so many hardships," said Mrs. Harvey, with tears in her eyes: "I dread the coming winter for them, poor fellows!"

"Well, but, mother," said Belle, "you know the blockade may be raised by that time, and it is quite probable that we may be recognized by France and England, too; then we will be able to get all we need."

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Harvey, with a sigh, "but, dear child, we have waited and hoped for that so long, and there yet seems no immediate prospect."

Nothing had yet been heard from Randolph, and Belle waited with ill-concealed anxiety for tidings from him. She had heard only that his command was in the rear, and there was nothing else to do but wait, and hope for the best.

Finally a vague rumor reached them that he had been wounded and had fallen into the enemy's hands, which in a few days was confirmed by Sambo, who put in his appearance at Belmont. With the tears in his eyes, he recounted the heroic charge made by his master at the head of his men in the face

of a murderous fire, which rained upon them from the heights above.

"I was glad 'fore de gracious, missus, when I heerd Mas' John *was* wounded, fur we thought sho he mus' be kilt. Ef you could a seen de way dem shells plowed up de airth, you'd been s'prized to see any of 'em comin' home."

"Where were you, Sam, to see so much?" asked Mrs. Harvey.

"Well, to tell de trufe, missus, Mas' John lef' me wid de wagons, but I got kinder feared he might git shot, so I ups an' goes to whar de avalanches was all drawed up a waitin' for de wounded, but, 'fore we'd been dar long, here come a shell a whizzin' frough de yar, and h'isted de top o' de hin'most one clean off. 'Sho's you born, ole miss, we lit out from dar in a hurry, 'ceptin' de avalanche what was struck, yah, yah," laughed Sam.

"But, Sam, how do you know, *certainly*, that Captain Randolph was wounded and captured?" asked Belle, unable to control her anxiety any longer.

"Kase I know it for sho, Miss Belle. Ef he had a been kilt, I never should a lef' dar widouten his body, to take home to his maw, honey. De las' thing she said was: 'Sambo, take good keer o' your Mas' John.' 'Dat I will, mistis,' ses I, an' I has never lef' him once, 'ceptin' when de bullets and de shells come atween us. You see, Mr. Gooch got hit in de shoulder."

"Did Mr. Gooch get wounded, too?" exclaimed Mrs. Harvey and Belle, together.

"Yes, indeed, mistis, he got a bad shoulder wound, an' he's comin' on wid de avalanche train," continued Sam, "but he hope Mas' John to git behin' a big tree, an' den come back fast es he could, for fear he'd be takened prisoner."

"And what has become of him?" asked Mrs. Harvey.

"I's lookin' for him ebbery minute', miss', but I's been studyin' ef I hadn't better go 'long home an' tell ole miss' 'bout Mas'

John. She'll be powerful troubled, ef she don't hear from him, kase he always writ to her de fust thing arter de battles, an' she'll think he's killed for sho."

"I expect that is the best thing for you to do, Sam," said Mrs. Harvey, quite touched at this evidence of consideration for his mistress. "Have you money, though?"

"I kin git trampotation like de rest ob de sojers, thank you, mistis," answered Sam, with a lofty air.

"You didn't see anything of Susan, did you, Sam, while you were in Pennsylvania?" asked Belle.

"We seed plenty o' niggahs, miss, but none whar I knowed," answered Sam, with dignity, as if not liking to be reminded of the fickle Susan.

"You didn't try to find her?" persisted Belle.

"Miss Belle," answered Sam, solemnly, "me an' Mas' John has bofe come to de reclusion dat females is like de Jack-o'-lantern—dey leads you 'roun' an' 'roun', tell dey gits you clean gone from yo' senses, an' den leaves you, so dar it is, an' we has bofe swore off."

Neither Mrs. Harvey nor Belle could refrain from laughing at this wholesale denunciation of their sex at the hands of Sam, and Belle attempted to offer him some consolation.

"I am sure Susan was not worthy of you, Sam, but you musn't judge all females by her, but hope for better luck next time."

"I's mighty nigh cawnsoled, miss, when I thinks she'll git de wust o' de bargain—but it's high time I was startin' for home, so, mistis, I'll bid you good bye, an' a Gawd bless you," saying which, he gave each a hearty shake of the hand, and took his departure.

Sambo had reasoned correctly, for when he reached home, he found his mistress in great anxiety, which was not lessened when Sam first made his appearance alone.

"Bless yo' heart, miss', don' you know I nebber would a lef'

Mas' John, 'ceptin' I couldn't hope it, an jes' as soon as he come back I's gwine back to him, sho.

"And the Yankees didn't persuade you to leave your master, Sam?" said Mrs. Randolph, in grateful tones.

"No, mistis, dey never tried it on me. I's as well off as I keers to be," he answered.

"I suspect you are hungry now, go down and tell the cook to give you a good breakfast, and after awhile we will talk some more," said Mrs. Randolph, kindly.

"To tell de trufe, ole miss', I *is* powerful hongry, an' I does want a tas'e o' Calline's hoe-cake, agin."

With that, Sam retired to the kitchen, where all the house-servants had congregated to welcome him.

"Well, Sam, *is* you back, show 'nuff?" and "Bless you, ole black niggah," were the salutations which greeted him, as his hand was cordially shaken by the different ones, though with the condescension on his part of a major-general.

"Lawd knows, I *is* mons'ous glad to be back wid you all once mo'! We's gittin' powerful tired o' sojerin', me an' Mas' John, but we's mos' cleaned out de Yanks, now; 'twon't take much longer."

"An' den we's gwine to be free, won't we, Sam?" said Caroline, the cook.

"Well, Calline," he answered, deliberately, "I isn't repared to say what de refect ob de fightin' is to be. You all know as to how Mr. Abe Linkum has done procermated as to how de cullid folks is free, but I's studdid a heap about it, an' it don't 'pear to me, howsomever, he's got to do wid udder folks' niggers. Dey tells me, too, 'at he never owned so much as *one* nigger, hisse'f—jes some po' rail-mauler what de polytishuns picked up somewhars out in de backwoods an' sot up for Presydent."

Just then the kitchen boy, having heard of Sam's advent, came rushing in to welcome him, also, and was making his way rudely through the admiring circle that surrounded him.

"You, Jeems Henry," exclaimed the cook, as she caught him by the collar. "Whar's yer manners. Hush up wid yer racket, or I'll bust de juice outen you, interruptin' uv Sam in dis here way, when he's jes' come back from sojerin'." Then, turning to Sam again, added :

"Set up, now, Sambo, en have some breakfas'," which she had managed to prepare in the intervals of his interesting conversation.

"I will, dat," he replied. "I's hongry 'nuff to swallow a whole army train, ladies, yah, yah," and he at once began an attack on a generous plate of ham and eggs, flanked on either side with his favorite hoe-cake and buttermilk.

"Whar's Amy?" he asked, presently; "I hasn't seed her yit, she ain't gone off, I hopes."

"No, indeed, Sam, she's here," answered Chloe, a housemaid, "but po' Amy is took wid a spell."

"Naw, Amy ain't took with no spell, no *sich a thing*," interposed Caroline, as she placed another steaming pile of eggs on Sam's plate, "it's jes' a cu'ious way Amy have. To tell de trufe, Sambo," she continued, in a confidential tone, "I believes Amy is 'seekin'.* Ever sence de big meetin' begin, Amy say she have visions, but I think she'll be all right when she git frough."

Soon Amy made her appearance, and Sam eyed her keenly as she passed through the kitchen without noticing him at all.

"Sho, Amy *seekin'!*" said Sam, with energy, now thoroughly convinced by her failure to notice him. "I hope she'll get frough 'fore I has to go back."

"Sam, was you skeered when you went into de battle?" asked Chloe, presently, who stood admiringly by, as mouthful after mouthful was stowed away in his cavernous jaws.

*"Seekin'" is an expression still used among the negroes to describe the condition of the newly-awakened sinner. In some instances the consciousness of their guilt has had such a depressing effect that they have been known to go for weeks without speaking, while eating scarcely enough to keep them alive.

"Skeered! Yah, yah," laughed Sam, between the mouthfuls. "We didn't have no time to get skeered, chile, we had to keep sich a shootin' an' a loadin'. Den when Mas' Gen'l Jones sont me back to fotch up de fresh troops, I never let de grass grow under my feet, but to tell de Gawd's trufe, ladies, I forget to go back myse'f, yah, yah!"

"Did Mas' Gen'l Jones sont you arter de fresh troops, Sambo?" asked Caroline, in tones of astonishment, while Sam was rapidly assuming the proportions of a hero in the eyes of the assembled kitchen.

"Sho he did, honey," continued Sam, with renewed inspiration, "an' I sont 'em flyin' up de hill, an' sot myself down under a kasson to watch de fight; mos', 'fore I knowed, dough, here come a shell flyin' frough de yar', 'whar is you,' 'whar is you.' Dat is what dey seems to be a sayin', *partickler* when you is hidin', an' when it busted mons'ous nigh me, says I, Sambo, you is a dead niggah, sho. But 'reckly, I foun' out it hadn't got me dat time, so I crawled outen dar an' made fur a big white oak, a piece away from dar, en, ladies, I hadn't mo' an' got dar 'fore here come anudder shell an' hit de kasson an' busted it all *too* pieces!"

"Lawdy, I sholy does hope de sojers won't come a nigh here," said Chloe.

"I ain't got no use for fightin', nuther," said Caroline, "but how did you get away from de tree, Sam?"

"To tell de Gawd's trufe, ladies, I never tried to get away from *dar*. No, no, I was too glad to git dat ar tree to hug. I staid dar till de enemy moved 'roun'' an' 'tacked my flank, an' den I flanked de tree, en. honey, I kep' on flankin' dat ar tree tell de fight was over."

Caroline and Chloe exchanged inquiring glances. At last Chloe ventured to ask:

"What you call dat, Sam; how does you flank a tree?"

"Ladies," answered Sam, with dignity, "dat is a milintery

'spression—what we sojers uses—it means by de Providence of de good Lawd dat ar tree saved my life."

"But, Calline," he resumed, after a short pause, "you all hasn't tole me nuthin' 'tall 'bout Phyllis—did she ebber get married to Jake?"

"Lawdy, Sam, didn't you hear 'bout dat, honey? She and Jake got married soon arter you an' Mas' John lef'," answered Caroline, "but it didn't las' long, dey soon got soppurated agin, an' Phyllis, she done gone to lib at de middle farm wid Miss Kitty—she nussin' fur her."

"Poor Jake," ejaculated Sam, in sympathetic tones.

"Lawd, Sam," says Chloe, "*Jake* don't keer—he's jes' as peart as if nuthin' had a happened."

"Hush!" said Sam, with a prolonged accent on the monosyllable.

Soon the 12 o'clock horn sounded, and the field hands coming into dinner were entertained with more of Sam's wonderful adventures, which were mostly appropriated from the experience of the men of his master's company, with numerous embellishments, however, suggested by his own lively imagination.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AGAIN the question of remaining "within the lines" was presented to our friends at Belmont, and on this occasion there was very little time for deliberation or preparation. A sad experience had brought Mrs. Harvey to the conclusion that she would not remain again exposed to the trials and vicissitudes of Federal rule, but a choice of ways and means was almost as limited as the time in which to make their exit. After canvassing the few opportunities that offered, they were as much at a loss as ever, until a friend of Mrs. Harvey's, a high dignitary in the Episcopal Church,* who had been forced to purchase a carriage and pair of horses for his own use, offered the three remaining seats to her.

Applicants for the driver's seat were numerous, numbering among them some of the most respectable citizens, who were only too willing to undertake the duties of the office for the privilege of the seat. Finally, the bishop decided in favor of one of his own fraternity, a Presbyterian divine, whose knowledge of the care of horses proved only second to his shepherd's intuition.

Thus convoyed, they left Belmont with heavy hearts, though the youthful members of the party soon rallied. The entire army was before them, and many of their acquaintances found it agreeable to become stragglers on this occasion. Among their most constant cavaliers were Major Anderson, of the Laurel Brigade, and young Gooch, who, in consideration of his recent wound, had been granted a furlough.

Mrs. Harvey's housewifely care had provided huge lunch-baskets, sufficient to last them till they should reach Staunton, which was their nearest point on the railroad leading to Rich-

*The late Bishop of Louisiana.

mond. The drive of ninety-six miles consumed three days and was more like a prolonged picnic than anything else. The spot for the mid-day meal was always selected beside a cool spring, whose pure waters furnished the draught that cheered without inebriating.

They had spread their oil-cloths and blankets on the soft, green sward, and arranged for their last rustic dinner, beneath the spreading branches of a venerable oak. The Episcopal bishop had pronounced a blessing in his deep, sonorous voice, while the Presbyterian brother epitomized his sentiments in a fervent "amen," the neighboring woods echoing meanwhile, the unusual sounds.

Far removed from the dusty road, and naught in sight to remind them of the toiling masses that were pursuing the same route, our friends resigned themselves to the fullest enjoyment of this rustic meal.

"I almost reproach myself for eating so good a dinner, Mrs. Harvey," said our ecclesiastical friend, "when I remember how our brave defenders are faring; but as you are responsible for the temptation, I shall place it all to your account," he added, laughing.

"Really, bishop, you give me credit for more than I deserve, and I am making a very poor return for the pleasant and unexpected mode of exit from our dear old home which you have so kindly provided," answered Mrs. Harvey, her eyes filling with tears, as she made allusion to the home which she little realized she had seen for the last time.

"You have been abroad a great deal, bishop," said Belle, presently; "tell me if there *is* a fairer land under the sun than our own beautiful Valley? Look now at those fleecy clouds resting on the mountains and now shifting so rapidly, then at the intense blue of the sky overhead, against which the deepening fringe of the old Blue Ridge seems such an appropriate finish; could anything be more beautiful?"

"And how delightfully quiet it all seems here!" added Carrie, "except now and then when we hear the rumble of the artillery along the turnpike."

"You are, indeed, very near right, young ladies," replied the bishop, "in thinking this one of the fairest portions of God's earth. Italy herself does not furnish bluer skies nor more gorgeous sunsets than I have witnessed from my study window, and which sometimes seem more like glimpses of that wondrous hereafter whose glories are only hinted at in the book of books. God has certainly blessed us with a beautiful land, and I don't wonder that our defenders maintain their cause so heroically."

"But, bishop," said Mrs. Harvey, "are you not beginning to have serious fears for the result? Our armies are dwindling away so perceptibly, and have so few comforts to enable them to bear up under all the hardships to which they are exposed."

"It is beginning to be a grave question, certainly, but I have an unwavering faith in the justice of God and the righteousness of the cause," he answered. "'And the darkest hour is always before dawn,'" added the disciple of Calvin, modestly.

"Then, too," said Belle, hopefully, "I am sure we will be recognized by England before very long."

Major Anderson and Gooch now rode up, having left them the evening before.

"Just in time, my brave fellows," said the bishop; "a few minutes more, and our good dinner would have been a thing of the past."

Room was soon made, and the soldiers took their seats in Turkish fashion.

"If rations are short, Mrs. Harvey, Gooch and I can re-enforce you with some 'hard tack,'" said Major Anderson, laughing and placing some army biscuit on the cloth before him.

"Those look so appetizing," said Belle, "I wonder how long since they were cooked? They remind me of some I made once," and Carrie and she laughed at the recollection.

"If you were obliged to eat one, Miss Belle, you would earnestly pray that they might never find time to cook another," said Gooch, fervently.

"You ungrateful fellow," said Major Anderson, "I fear you were spoiled by all the good things that fell into our hands in Pennsylvania. Even hard tack is a luxury to fellows that were reduced to parched corn."

"They come in play mighty well when ammunition is short, I admit. I used most of mine in that way," answered Gooch.

"If you are not well I don't blame you at all for finding fault with such fare, Mr. Gooch," said Carrie, sympathetically; "you are in a condition to enjoy your furlough to the fullest extent, I think."

"I could mention one circumstance which would add greatly to its enjoyment, Miss Carrie," said he, in low tones.

"What, for instance?" asked Carrie, blushing red at having asked the very question which she would have avoided.

"Can't you imagine," he continued, bending lower, so that no one else heard him. "You are going to Richmond, and I in the other direction. Could anything be more unfortunate for me?"

Dinner soon over, the gentlemen lighted their pipes for a smoke, not even the bishop disdaining this "sweet consolation."

Belle and Major Anderson strolled off from the rest of the party, and were soon seated on a fallen tree some distance away.

"To-night we shall reach Staunton, I suppose," said Major Anderson, "and this precious pilgrimage, which I have found so pleasant, too much so for my own good, I fear, will be at an end. Will you also regret its termination, Miss Belle?" he added

"Indeed I will; I could not have imagined a more agreeable tour through the Valley than we have made. Such lovely weather and such good company," she added, laughing, "all have combined to make it thoroughly delightful."

"Camp life will go pretty hard again, I fear, for awhile at least. It is well for Gooch that he is going home; he is awfully demoralized. Miss Carrie and yourself, though, will go to Richmond, and amid its festivities will soon forget even the existence of such poor devils as we."

"Indeed, we mean to devote most of our time to working for the soldiers, I assure you," said Belle, earnestly. "We have been able to do so little heretofore, owing to our being so often cut off, that Carrie and I have planned to bend all our energies to making some of them at least comfortable."

"You will devote yourself to the army as an organization, then, and promise not to concentrate on any special member of it, will you not?" asked Anderson, half laughing.

"I don't quite understand you," said Belle. "In the first place, we are going to organize a knitting club and try to furnish at least one division with socks before cold weather. We noticed so many of our poor fellows who were barefooted."

"O! would that I were a foot soldier!" exclaimed Anderson, in a tragic manner. "Could nothing induce you to insert a clause in your constitution which would permit you, under certain circumstances, to furnish *one* cavalryman with a few pairs of half hose?"

"I am really afraid that it could not be done," answered Belle, smiling; "you know they are better able to take care of themselves than the poor infantry."

"Well, is there any law whereby a smoking-cap would be ruled out?" persisted Anderson.

"No, indeed," she replied, "and I will promise to crochet you one of those."

"Very well; remember, now, that we compromise on a smoking-cap to be fashioned by your fairy fingers. With that on my head, and my pipe in my mouth, the reveries of my bachelorhood will rival Ike Marvel himself. And would it be presumption, dear Miss Belle, to hope that some time in the future I

might receive at your hands a greater boon?" he added, earnestly.

"I am sure, major, I shall always be glad to contribute to your comfort or happiness in any way that I can," said Belle, while the carnest expression of her eyes showed that she understood more than her words were intended to admit.

Just then the bishop called: "Sorry to interrupt you, Anderson, but it's time to strike camp, if we would reach Staunton to-night."

Soon all were in motion, the horses were once more harnessed to the carriage, while Mrs. Harvey packed the fragments of the feast. Before long they were again moving toward Staunton, reaching there just as the stars asserted their supremacy over the fading twilight.

Adieus were spoken and the little party which had journeyed together for the past three days were now to separate.

Major Anderson had no further opportunity of renewing his conversation with Belle, but rode up to the carriage window to say good-bye.

"When may I come for my smoking-cap?" he managed to whisper as he held her soft, warm hand in his a little longer than was necessary to say the parting word.

"Oh! very soon. I'll do it right away, before I forget it," she answered, with energy and withdrawing her hand.

"I beseech you not to do it at all if it should be such a tax on your memory," returned he, stiffly, and riding close beside the window as the carriage moved on.

"But I promised, you know," said Belle.

"I will absolve you from the promise, so don't trouble yourself," and bowing his adieus he wheeled his horse and rode hastily away.

Instantly Belle regretted what she had said, but now it was too late, and she determined to atone for it by fulfilling her promise in a more leisurely manner than she had at first intended.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MRS. HARVEY with great difficulty found suitable apartments for even her small family in the crowded capital, and on the morning after their arrival, Pauline and her mother were announced.

Belle invited Pauline to go with her to her own room, where they were soon in the depths of those confidential confessions which are so dear to every girlish heart.

"You naughty girl, Pauline, how could you treat poor Charlie Holmes so, you don't know how mournful he looks?" said Belle.

"Does he really? Poor fellow! I do feel so sorry for him—but, Belle, do you know that Colonel Appleton has resigned, and mother and father have given their consent?" said Pauline, mysteriously.

"Consent to what?" asked Belle, in surprised tones. "To his resigning from the United States army? I should think they would."

"Oh, I don't mean that, Belle; of course, they have consented to—to—oh, you know what I mean, and you are to be my only bridesmaid."

"Why, Pauline Rhett, can I trust my own ears? Do you really mean that you intend to marry Appleton, now, during the war?" exclaimed Belle, in accents of amazement.

"Yes, Belle, but why should you be so surprised? I met him at your house, in the first place, you know," answered Pauline, coolly.

"But he was not at war with the South, then."

"Nor is he now," retorted Pauline.

"But he has been, and may be again for all you know," said Belle.

"No, he has promised me that he will not enter the army again, and, Belle, he is going to take me abroad, where we will remain until the dreadful war is over. I positively refused at first, and for a long time, but he urged it so, and seemed so distressed at my refusal that I finally consented, and now that father and mother have agreed to it, I feel very happy," said Pauline.

Belle looked at her with wondering eyes. "Can it be possible, Pauline, that you are happy at such a prospect? Marrying a Yankee, the enemy of your country and people! I thought you would give up the idea, when he entered the army, however much you might have loved him before that."

"But, Belle, he is not a Yankee, he is a Philadelphian," answered Pauline, half laughing. "Did you ever hear that before, my lady?"

And both girls laughed together as Belle recalled her own words which Pauline now quoted against her.

Presently Pauline continued:

"He was to have come on here this month, but the sudden illness of his father called him back home again, while he was waiting in Washington to hear from me, and the irregularity of flag-of-truce letters prevents our writing to each other often."

Belle did not attempt to conceal her great surprise at this communication from Pauline. She had no idea that affairs had progressed so far between them.

"I don't know how you can be *happy* anywhere, Pauline, when our poor country is so distracted and afflicted as it is. Don't any anxiety for your brothers make you hesitate?"

"I have thought it all over, Belle, and my remaining in the South would not lessen the danger to which they are exposed, and, besides, it is all settled, and I wish you would not remind me of it," said Pauline, with some impatience.

"Does no feeling of regret mingle with your memory of poor Charlie, Pauline?" continued Belle, mercilessly.

"Of course, you know I feel sorry for Charlie, and regret that he loves me as much as he does, but I can't help it," answered Pauline, petulantly.

"Pauline," exclaimed Belle, almost angrily, "I believe this trip abroad has had more to do with your decision than anything else."

"You have no right to say that," she answered, in an injured tone, "you know better than any one else how much I have always loved Appleton."

"Yes, but I am certainly surprised to find you on the eve of marrying him now, as affairs stand. If you had been living with the Yankees, as we have been, I don't think you would have entered into this arrangement."

"Well, think it all over, Belle, dear," said Pauline, as she left her friend, "and try to take a more comfortable view of it for my sake, will you not?"

Both armies had now settled down into winter quarters, the recollection of the wholesale slaughter at Gettysburg making each side well content with its inactivity. General Grant's victories in the South-west had brought him prominently before the people at the North, as well as the Government at Washington, which hastened to express its gratitude and reward him for his prowess, by making him commander-in-chief, and placing him in immediate command of the "Grand Army" that had accomplished so many masterly retreats under so many different commanders.

General Lee, on the other hand, still retained the same high position to which his superior ability had elevated him the second summer of the war, and now spent the time in reorganizing his forces and placing them in their best condition for the approaching campaign.

While the enemy was receiving re-enforcements and new equipments, the Confederate leaders had but a small field from which to expect accessions to their ranks. All the Departments

of the Government were overhauled and many who occupied 'bomb-proof' positions were sent to the field, while their places were filled with delicate women, hitherto unaccustomed to clerical or other routine work.

"We have made arrangements to meet at our rooms to-night," said Belle to Pauline, as she met the latter on the street one morning, "and organize our knitting club, and although it may be for only a short time, I would be so glad, Pauline, to have you join us, too."

"I will, indeed, Belle, with pleasure," she answered, "but you will have to teach me how to knit."

"That art, fortunately, is soon learned," said Belle, "so I shall certainly expect you; until then, good-bye," and she passed on, thoroughly engrossed with the plans for her enterprise.

At the appointed hour, the rooms were filled with laughing maidens, assembled at Belle's instance, to form themselves into a regular organization, the object of which should be to knit socks for the soldiers. After much discussion and a great deal of superfluous talking, they framed a constitution and by-laws, by which their club was to be governed.

A special clause had been inserted, after provoking many arguments pro and con (the pros, however, predominating very largely) allowing the admission of their soldier friends, after a stipulated amount of work had been accomplished. The subject of a name for their club next elicited much spirited debate, but nothing had been decided upon when the hour for adjourning had arrived, and they separated to meet again the following week, each promising to bring material with which to begin work.

Belle and Carrie, after their long imprisonment, were quite equal to the full enjoyment of all the gayeties of the Confederate capital. Beset by calls and invitations, they found so many social demands on their time, that Belle feared their more important engagements might suffer.

The city was surrounded by camps on all sides, and their

acquaintances among the soldiers found easy and frequent access to them. Randolph was still a prisoner, there having been no exchange made since the battle of Gettysburg, and Belle watched the papers with eager interest, to learn the first tidings of a renewal of the cartel.

Charlie Holmes, who was encamped not far away, also missed his friend when he had occasion to visit the capital during the winter. He had battled nobly with the passion, which at one time threatened to master him, and had regained much of his old-time cheerfulness; convinced at last of the hopelessness of his suit with Pauline.

Major Hughes, besides many others, had been added to their list of friends, and every prospect of a gay winter was before them. On the occasion of the next meeting of their club, all the members came armed with material for work, and right earnestly did they go at it. This humane organization not only furnished an escape valve for their sympathetic energies, but also provided many a poor fellow, where the Government could not; although, owing to the irregular attendance and unskilled labor of several of their number, the veterans were sometimes furnished with an equally irregular and uncouth wrapping for their war-worn feet.

The working hours had drawn to a close, when several gentlemen, previously invited, were ushered in. Pauline and Charlie had never met since the night she had dismissed him, with the injunction to forget her. Charlie had carefully avoided a meeting since hearing of her approaching marriage with Appleton, until he could show her that he had obeyed her to the letter, at least, and he came to-night, fully persuaded that no trace of his old love would betray him, and anxious to test the effect of her presence.

Immediately upon entering the room he became conscious, without looking directly at her, that Pauline was standing almost opposite him, though some distance away, and he breathed more freely when he found there was no danger of any immediate

proximity. He presently found his way to the side of Miss Campbell, a dark-eyed beauty from Alabama, and was soon absorbed in her conversation.

"Colonel Holmes," said she, "we are in quite a quandary about a name for our club, can you not assist us in deciding?"

"I shall be most happy, Miss Campbell," answered Charlie, "to lend my poor efforts to so laudable an enterprise."

"Well, don't you think we should give it a name suggestive of the work we propose to do?" asked Julia Campbell, earnestly.

"By all means," answered Charlie, with an air of serious deliberation, "and it will accomplish much more effective work, I am confident, if it has a high-sounding title, the 'Great Consolidated Confederate Hose Company,' for instance; something of that style?"

"Dear me, Colonel Holmes," exclaimed Julia, in tones of alarm, "don't suggest anything so formidable, it would scare away half the members. Knitting, you know, is a very simple operation, and the name should be equally so."

"Knitting *is* a simple operation," said Charlie, repeating Julia's words in a meditative sort of way, "that is a fact. Let me see; how will this do? 'The Sockdolager Club.' Now, it strikes me, that embodies all the points. It is very suggestive, you perceive, while at the same time implying a mild degree of self-reliance."

"That is the very name," exclaimed Julia, delightedly, "I must call our president, and tell her the appropriate title you propose. Belle Harvey," she continued, raising her voice, "do come and hear what a splendid name Colonel Holmes has suggested for our club. 'The Sockdolager;' could anything be more suitable?"

All eyes were turned on Charlie, and Pauline observed for the first time that he seemed entirely oblivious of her presence. His back was even turned toward her, and he seemed all attention to the fair girl beside him.

"Has he entirely forgotten me?" she thought, with a momentary pang.

Now he was saying something, which brought his face very near to Miss Campbell's, and caused hers to redden slightly. Her companion soon grew weary of Pauline's abstracted air, and found an excuse for leaving her side. Thus left to herself, she returned once more to the homely work with which she had been struggling in the early part of the evening, glad indeed to be left alone with this strange tumult at her heart.

Before very long, however, Major Hughes joined her, and stood beside her with an amused smile, as he watched her efforts to weave together the coarse threads of yarn that looked so strangely out of place in her dainty fingers.

> "'Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
> When first we practice to deceive,'"

He presently repeated.

"Pray, who is trying to deceive anybody, Major Hughes?" asked Pauline, quickly.

"No one that I know of, Miss Pauline. I just happened to think of that couplet as I watched your efforts. I am quite sure that *you* never tried to deceive any one," he answered, innocently.

Wearying of her efforts, she again put her work aside, and turned toward Major Hughes. Her beautiful eyes were raised to his with a half-sorrowful, half-pleading look, that he never remembered to have seen before.

"Do you believe, major, that this dreadful war can last much longer?"

"That is a hard question to answer, Miss Pauline; but why are you so especially interested in its termination? I thought, or rather heard, that it would virtually terminate, for you, very soon."

"We ought not to believe everything that we hear," she answered, petulantly.

"I should be most happy to disbelieve that, I am sure," replied Hughes. "Will you authorize my doing so?"

"Tell me, first," answered Pauline, abstractedly, and glancing uneasily around her, "do you know Miss Campbell? Where is she from?"

"Ah! indeed, I know her well; she is from my State, and has only been in Richmond a short time. Don't you think her handsome?" asked Hughes, looking admiringly at Julia.

"I have really seen too little of her to form an opinion," answered Pauline. "Will she be in the city long?"

"Oh! I suppose she is here for the winter. Her father, you know, is in the Cabinet, and, to add to her other attractions," continued Hughes, maliciously, "he owns about a thousand negroes, besides half the State of Alabama. I hope you will call on her, for my sake, Miss Pauline."

"Is she a *very* special friend of yours?" asked Pauline, with unmistakable emphasis, and beginning to recover her composure somewhat.

"Umph! not so special as one might wish, in view of her superior attractions; but," he continued, with an unconscious air, "whatever chance I may have stood before she came to Richmond has all vanished now, since she has met with this dashing cavalry colonel. I suppose, of course, you remember him?"

"To whom do you allude?" asked Pauline, with interest.

"Why, who could I mean but the gentleman at her side, Colonel Holmes? See how absorbed he seems!"

Pauline's blood was now surging violently. She was first hot and then cold. Her model of constancy thus crumbling before her! She had never contemplated Charlie in any other light than that of a devoted and constant lover, notwithstanding she had dismissed him, and now her selfish pride was shocked and mortified to hear of his devotion to another.

"I don't think she is a *bit* pretty," said Pauline, as Julia just then turned her full face toward them.

"Judging her by some standards, I doubt if she would bear off the palm, nor would it be flattering to her style to subject her features to a very close analysis," said Hughes, in a critical tone, "but just watch the play of her countenance as she talks to Charlie. There, now, could anything be more captivating?" he continued, mercilessly.

"I am sorry I can't agree with you," answered Pauline, with ill-concealed irritation, "though I admit, she seems very much interested in what Colonel Holmes is saying to her."

"It is scarcely fair in us, I think, to be watching them so closely," said Hughes. "Come with me to the piano, will you not? I've not heard you play for so long."

Pauline arose at once, as if glad to put an end to the conversation, and taking Major Hughes' arm, turned her back on the pair they had been discussing. Her handsome figure showed to its best advantage as she crossed the room on her way to the piano, and soon taking her seat, she struck a few chords, as if wondering where to allow her fingers to wander. Then followed, one after another, wonderful combinations of harmony, which have come to us from different masters, and seldom have they been more faithfully interpreted.

The effect of her music was magnetic; a spell seemed to have fallen over the entire room—no one spoke. Suddenly Pauline ceased playing; Major Hughes leaned forward and whispered, "Go on."

Half hesitating, her fingers sought the keys again; this time it was a wordless dirge, but she went bravely through, then rising hastily from her seat, cast a quick glance in the direction where she had last observed Charlie, but his seat by Julia Campbell's side was vacant, nor could she find him, as she glanced hurriedly over the room.

He had made some slight excuse to Miss Campbell, during the playing of the last piece, and gone quietly out. Nor did he appear again until, as they were leaving, she saw him offer his

arm to Julia, as the latter descended the stairway ahead of her. Major Hughes stepped forward, as Pauline reached the foot of the stairs, and offering his arm, they were soon on their way home.

"Do you care, Miss Pauline," he said, presently, "to go to the ball to-morrow night? The Starvation Club meets this time at the Garnetts. I should be most happy to act as your escort, if you will go."

"I will go, with pleasure, major," she answered, "but I believe I would enjoy these reunions more if refreshments were not contraband," she added, with an effort to be gay.

"Yes, I am sure we all would; but then you know it would be very unpatriotic. Some old fogies even suggest that the balls themselves are very inappropriate, at such a time, but we can't be fighting the Yankees all the time, though I confess I feel very much like it—but, excuse me, Miss Pauline, I keep forgetting," said Hughes, in an apologetic tone.

"On the contrary, you seem determined to remember. I think, major, this faculty of forgetting seems to come easier to some of your sex than to you," said Pauline, in regretful tones.

"You heartless flirt," thought Hughes, "to regret that poor Charlie can forget you, when you have bid him do so."

"You speak enigmatically, Miss Pauline," he said, aloud, "though I believe it would be better for all of my sex, could they but taste of Lethe's happy waters, upon quitting the presence of such a fair sorceress as yourself."

"Indeed, you do me great injustice, major. I believe you think I have no heart," said Pauline, mournfully.

"I do you no such wrong, Miss Pauline, but I am beginning to believe that you are deceiving yourself, as well as others, to persist in so unnatural a course as you seem to have mapped out for yourself," said Hughes, with an audacity which surprised himself.

Very little more was said by either before reaching home,

and when Hughes had parted with Pauline, he made his way to the Capitol square, which was near. There Charlie had appointed to meet him. He found the latter seated on the steps of the monument in the shadow of one of the statues, which towered above him.

"Take a seat here for awhile, Hughes; I don't feel like going yet," said Charlie.

"It's too confounded cold, Charlie," he returned, "to be sitting on these hard stones; let's go to the Spottswood and have a smoke."

"No, I don't feel like smoking yet; I want to breathe the pure air awhile longer, old fellow; sit down," said Charlie.

"Charlie, old boy," said Hughes, affectionately, "if you keep this thing up, you will be a candidate for one of those vacant pedestals yourself before long. Well," he added, in a jocular tone, "I'll promise to see you becomingly mounted. Which will you prefer as your nearest neighbor, George Mason or Patrick Henry?"

"I really envy you, Hughes," said Charlie, rising; "I wonder if anything on earth could sober you."

"I don't feel very sober just now, but it would not take this wind long to do it. Let us walk a little faster; I am nearly frozen."

They now started off at a rapid pace.

"Miss Pauline was quite interested in your companion to-night," said Hughes, presently; "she asked me almost a thousand questions about her—when you met her? how long you had known her? besides a lot I can't remember."

"I've no doubt you did the subject full justice, and gave as little satisfaction in as many words as possible," said Charlie, pleased to hear that which he told him.

"I did, indeed, old fellow. You know I don't sympathize a bit with you in your admiration for Miss Pauline. I am mad with you all the time I am with her," said Hughes, boldly.

"You don't know her as well as I do, Hughes," answered Charlie, sadly.

"And thank the Lord I don't," he replied, fervently; "I know enough to see that she is a consummate flirt, though."

"You mistake her there, Hughes. She is not a flirt; she has never deceived me once, or given me the least encouragement."

"'Pon my soul, Charlie, forgive me for saying so, but you are a bigger fool than I thought you were," said his friend, laughing.

"You have struck it exactly now. I am a big fool to fancy for one moment that such a superior being could love such a common-place mortal as myself. I have often wondered how I ever had the face to tell her of my love," said Charlie, with a sigh.

"The pity is that you ever found an opportunity for doing so, and if you will take my advice you will continue to devote yourself to Miss Campbell, and take her to the ball at the Garnetts' to-morrow night. Miss Pauline has promised to go with me."

Hughes did not confide to Charlie, though, that he had a twofold motive in advising him to devote himself to Miss Campbell, and having now reached the Spottswood they resigned themselves to the comforts of the pipe, cigars during those days being reserved for a favored few.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON the following night the rooms at the Garnetts' were thronged at an early hour. The Starvation Club was an outgrowth of the times, and flourished during the last two years of the war at the Confederate capital. Costly entertainments, where tables groaned beneath the weight of the luxuries thereon, and where the fruit of the vine flowed freely, were among the things of the past, save now and then an enterprising blockade-runner would publish his successful piracy with an elaborate display. These last gatherings, however, were not often patronized by the most patriotic element, who thought that all that could be spared from home necessities should go to the soldiers. Thus it came to pass that the younger portion of the community made a compromise with conscience, and had their dancing without refreshments.

Every State in the Confederacy was represented, as the capital offered inducements of one kind and another to the pleasure-seeker as well as to the politician. Here the dark-eyed Southern beauty pitted her attractions against her Virginia sisters, while even poor down-trodden Maryland (besides the band of intrepid heroes that represented her in the field, and whose record sheds an undying luster on the cause they sacrificed so much to uphold) furnished a bevy of fair women unsurpassed for beauty and grace.

Julia Campbell stands in the embrasure of a bay window, half hidden by the lace curtains herself, but watching with interest the dancers as they whirl past. Charlie Holmes is by her side and more prominently in view.

"What a very graceful girl Belle Harvey is," said Julia, presently; "with whom is she dancing, Colonel Holmes?"

"That's Anderson, of the Laurel Brigade. I was not aware

before to-night that he was in town. I would like to introduce him after awhile," said Charlie; "I want you to form a good impression of our Virginia cavaliers."

"You might think it flattery if I were to tell you what a pleasant impression I had already formed of them," said Julia, shyly.

"Thank you," said Charlie, bowing, while it suddenly occurred to him that it might not be best for him to be paying such exclusive attention to Miss Campbell.

"Look, Colonel Holmes," exclaimed Julia, "who is that magnificent-looking woman with Major Hughes? She's just entering the room, and walks as if she trod the air."

"That," said Charlie, with a mighty effort to appear indifferent, "is a young lady from South Carolina, Miss Rhett. She was at the meeting of your club last night."

"Ah! yes," rejoined Julia, "I remember now; she was the young lady who played so finely. The change in her dress made me fail to recognize her. Her costume surely must have run the blockade; it is too handsome to have originated in the Confederacy."

"Very likely," said Charlie, curtly.

"I suspect Frank Hughes is in love with her," said Julia, rattling on; "he was always the most susceptible fellow in the world."

"Very likely," rejoined Charlie again, and wondering how much oftener he would be called upon to express himself thus; for, to save his life, he could think of nothing else to say, and devoutly wished himself back in camp again.

Just then he caught Hughes' eye, who soon availed himself of a favorable opportunity to leave Pauline's side and join the party in the window.

"Why are you not dancing, Miss Julia?" he asked, upon joining them.

"I intend to presently," she answered; "we took our stand

here until I had all the distinguished personages pointed out to me. I have just been lost in admiration of the lady you brought into the room. Why didn't you tell me about her? Colonel Holmes, though, has been enlightening me, and I know all about it now," continued Julia, in a teazing tone.

Charlie looked amazed, but Hughes took the cue directly.

"Now, don't, Miss Julia, you will make me blush right here before everybody, and only one hand to cover my face with, too; spare me, please."

"You are not keeping up your old reputation, you know, if you fail in ready homage to every pretty face," she continued, with some feeling.

"She speaks knowingly, Hughes—from experience, shall I infer?" said Charlie, inquiringly.

"Yes, she does, Charlie," he answered, with mock earnestness; "Miss Julia was my first sweetheart, but she treated me shamefully."

"I always thought you looked like a 'victim of the unrequited,'" said Charlie, laughing.

"And now," said Hughes, placing his hand on his heart in a truly dramatic manner, "you behold the fair syren that ruthlessly dashed the hopes she inspired, and now smiles at the destruction she has wrought."

Julia looked at Hughes beseechingly, though half-amused, but Belle Harvey, coming up just then, interrupted her answer:

"Why, Julia, what are you hiding away here for? Major Hughes looks as if he was getting ready to make a declaration, though I should think he would select a more sequestered spot for it," said Belle, laughing; "but, excuse me," she added, "let me introduce my friend—Major Anderson, Miss Campbell; Major Hughes, too, will, I am sure, be glad to meet a fellow-soldier."

The party now soon dispersed, Charlie leading Belle to a quadrille then forming, and Anderson, Miss Campbell.

"'There was more truth than poetry' in all that I said to Miss Julia, Holmes," Hughes managed to whisper, as Charlie walked away.

After taking their places on the floor, Charlie was electrified to find that Pauline was his *vis-a-vis*, and, as he caught her eye, her beautiful head bowed in cordial recognition of his presence; there was plainly nothing to do but bow in return. He tried to talk to Belle during the intervals of the dance, but knew that his conversation was incoherent from the answers she gave him, as well as the half-puzzled expression of her face. Once, only, when Pauline's hand came in contact with his, did he gently press it, and—could it be possible that she withdrew it reluctantly?

"What could Pauline mean?" Charlie's brain was on fire now. "I must speak to her," he said to himself. "Can it be only pity that she feels for me?" Then Hughes' words recur to him—"'Consummate flirt.' I won't believe it, and he is an unfeeling rascal to say so; I shall not like Hughes as well if he takes advantage of my friendship to talk to me so again. Confound him!"

Charlie had resigned Belle to her next partner and withdrawn himself to a distant part of the room, where he stood intently regarding a statue, though he really had no idea that he was looking at it at all, so entirely preoccupied were his thoughts. Presently Pauline's voice caught his ear, and he looked quickly around, as she passed him, in time to receive another bow and gracious smile, which he chose to fancy meant more than mere recognition.

He gazed after her till she disappeared through a doorway opposite; then a wild desire to follow and speak to her possessed his breast. Straightway he forgot all his vows to resign her forever, and rushed headlong through the throng in the direction which had been taken by Pauline and her partner, and, upon reaching the door, saw they were sitting very near him.

Mustering all his courage, he went up and offered his hand, in a half-hesitating sort of manner, but the way in which she received it quite put him at his ease, as she made room for him beside her, and before long they were left alone.

"To what am I indebted for this privilege?" asked Charlie.

"Purely and entirely to my good nature," returned Pauline, "for you have certainly done nothing to merit it."

"I am deeply sensible of your kindness, and highly appreciative of your good nature," said Charlie, stiffly. "Can I prove my gratitude in any way, pray?"

"Yes, by treating me more as a friend than you do," answered Pauline, in low tones.

"Your instructions are inconsistent—how can I possibly obey them all?" said Charlie, eagerly.

"I say things sometimes without due reflection," answered she; "you must not always take me so literally."

Charlie looked up quickly:

"What do mean, Pauline? For God's sake, speak plainly. What *did* you tell me here in Richmond a year ago?"

"I only meant that you should never speak to me again upon one certain subject. I like you much too well, though, Colonel Holmes, to give you up as a friend," she said, in her coyest manner.

"Do you think, Pauline, that I can so control the absorbing passion I feel for you as to bring it within the conventional bounds of an ordinary friendship?" asked Charlie, fiercely. "You know well that I can not, and you do but mock me to suggest it," he added. "It must be one thing or the other, and you have settled it, and I, alas! am a fool for thinking you might have regretted your decision."

Pauline's eyes rested on the floor during this last speech of Charlie's, and her heightened color showed that it affected her more than she would have him know.

"Will you be kind enough to find my escort for me, Colonel

Holmes?" she presently said. "I feel ill, and will return home, I believe," she added, in subdued tones.

Without a word Charlie got up and went quickly in search of Major Hughes. Finding him, they returned together to where Pauline sat, who now really looked very pale.

"Good-night and good-bye," said Charlie, as he offered his hand, while Hughes looked at him inquiringly. "I return to my command to-morrow," he added, by way of explanation, and soon left them.

Pauline, rising, took Major Hughes' arm, and reached the hall as Charlie was passing through the outer door. He turned just in time to observe a livid pallor overspread Pauline's face as she reeled and fell backward. Springing to her side he caught her insensible form greedily to his breast and bore her tenderly back to the dressing-room. Resigning her, presently, to the care of Belle Harvey, whom Hughes had hurriedly summoned, Charlie withdrew.

When the evening was over and he had returned once more to the quarters which Hughes kindly shared with him on his visits to Richmond, he waited with restless impatience for his friend's return, as he knew he would bring further tidings of Pauline. Sure enough, his welcome footsteps were heard at last, and Charlie met him at the door, but Hughes was provokingly silent.

"Well?" asked Charlie, impatiently.

"Not well at all," said he, half angrily, "you have gone and knocked the whole business in the head. What the devil did you say to Miss Pauline, Charlie?"

"That is none of your business, I think," said Charlie. "Tell me how she is, and if she went home, Hughes, and stop your nonsense."

Hughes, seeing that Charlie was too much in earnest to be trifled with, answered him more to the point than was his habit.

"She is better; in fact, quite well again, I think, and I, myself, got a carriage and Miss Belle and I escorted her to her

home. Now, does that meet with your approbation?" asked Hughes.

"Well, why couldn't you tell me that at first? Why do you always make yourself out to be worse than you are?" said Charlie. "And a fellow is blessed in having you for a friend, even if you do tell him some plain truths occasionally," he added, gratefully.

"Now, don't make me out as deserving more than I do, because I did it with a very ill grace; I didn't relish it a bit. I knew that Miss Pauline had said or done something of which she was ashamed, or she would not have been so powerfully affected—tell me what it was, Charlie."

"I think it must have been the close air of the crowded room and the dancing so long without refreshment of any kind," answered Charlie, evasively.

"Ha, ha, ha! Charlie Holmes, don't you ever try to fool anybody, not your old friend Hughes, anyhow; it won't go down. I never saw you try to tell a story but once before; don't you remember at school, the time you told old man Johnston that you didn't *see* anybody take the apple from his desk, when you *knew* I had taken it, because I offered you a piece, and you recognized the big red apple that had been there all day, and wouldn't have it, and, besides, gave me a lecture on taking what did not belong to me, which did me lots of good, too. But you just mustn't try to fool me, old fellow, because you can't."

Charlie couldn't refrain from smiling, as he answered:

"Well, if I must tell you, I suppose I must. We got to talking about old times, of course, and I presume I was a little bit more earnest than she expected, or I ought to have been—that's all."

"It was just as I anticipated. If you had only let me manage the thing I should have done it more adroitly. Charlie, you are as innocent as a baby, where women are concerned; if you ever do get married your wife will lead you a dance," said Hughes.

"If I am ever so fortunate as to marry the woman of my choice I will take a pride in her pleasure, I know, but that happy fate is not destined for me," said Charlie, gloomily. "I am going back to camp and stay there."

"If you had but taken my advice and devoted yourself to Julia Campbell, you would have brought that girl around square, if I am not mistaken. Now, that she has gotten her father's and mother's consent to her marrying Appleton, and he himself has resigned, and promises to take her abroad, she feels like Alexander, with nothing else to do, and I believe she has found out that she is not satisfied, after all. The Lord only knows what she is up to. I only wish you would let her alone. I confess I would like to see her punished some way or other," said Hughes, half angrily.

"Let us drop the subject," said Charlie, dryly; "I've made up my mind in the matter and will keep my resolution in the future. I confess I was a fool for acting as I did."

Recent letters from Philadelphia had again postponed Appleton's visit to Richmond, owing to the continued illness of his father, thereby giving Pauline time to reflect over her engagement, and know her own mind more fully on the subject.

"Why are these last letters a relief to me, instead of bringing me cause for regret? Now, that all opposition is withdrawn, and Edward Appleton has left the army, and the accomplishment of my wishes seems assured, why do I feel such a sense of relief as the day is again postponed? Is this the way a woman should feel toward the man who is to be her lifelong companion? Is it right to marry him, unless I feel that jealous regard for his happiness which would prompt me to eagerly forsake all else to be with him? I fear not."

It is so easy to persuade one's self that the desirable thing is the dutiful.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BELLE and Carrie sat in their cosy parlor, both earnestly engaged with their knitting, when Gooch and Major Hughes were announced, the former having returned from his furlough and looking much improved. Both girls greeted him cordially, but a certain shyness in Carrie's manner betrayed more than ordinary pleasure.

"I have brought you a piece of good news, young ladies," said Major Hughes, after they were seated. "There is to be an exchange of prisoners, shortly, and *Captain Randolph* will be back again," he added, looking at Belle, significantly.

"How glad I feel for the poor fellows," exclaimed Belle, "how delighted they will be at getting home again, and then, too, their services are very much needed in the army," she added, demurely.

"I would really enjoy seeing you under fire, Miss Belle," whispered Hughes.

"What do you mean, major, for mercy's sake?" exclaimed Belle, in tones of alarm.

"You are so delightfully cool," he answered, with an amused smile.

"Suppose I should be killed?" asked Belle, laughing.

"But you wouldn't; you would bear a charmed life, I know; but, honestly now, tell me, are you not glad, *very* glad, I mean, to hear that Randolph is to be back so soon?"

"Did I not say I was glad when you first told me?" she answered, evasively.

"I shall put in my claim to rejoice, also," interrupted Gooch, "over the return of my illustrious commander. Poor fellow, I left him under very trying circumstances, though I staid with him as long as I could."

"Yes," said Belle, "Sambo gave us a very graphic description of the time Captain Randolph was wounded, as well as of some remarkable experiences of his own."

"What has become of the faithful fellow, anyhow?" asked Gooch

"He went back to his home to remain until his master should be exchanged, I believe," said Belle.

"I sincerely hope, Mr. Gooch, that you will not appear on the battlefield in that new uniform," remarked Hughes, presently. "If you do, you will be shot, sure; there is not another as clean, in your regiment. Where in the world did you find it, anyhow?"

"My sister devoted a handsome riding habit to providing me with this suit, but I shall reserve it for high occasions, such as the present. I took the precaution to bring my old ones along, too, after being duly scrubbed and patched, and I shall don them whenever I expect a call from Mr. Yank, I assure you," said Gooch, pleasantly.

The comparatively open winter had been favorable to operations in the field, and the scarcity of all kinds of military supplies rendered it imperative for the army to take advantage of every opportunity that presented itself for making reprisals. In this way the cavalry branch of the service, especially in the Valley, was kept in motion much of the time, while with the opening of spring again, began the periodical movement of the Federal masses against the Confederate capital.

"Certainly now," thought their confident supporters, "with the hero of Vicksburg at the head of the Grand Army, and his faithful ally, General Starvation, surely and insidiously at work in the enemy's camp, this rebellious nest must soon be destroyed."

The sources to which the Confederate leaders could now look for recruits were few indeed, and though the prisoners taken at Gettysburg had been exchanged, many still suffered from wounds received on that sanguinary field.

Our friend Colonel Randolph had quite recovered, and upon the occasion of an early visit to Mrs. Harvey's rooms was much amused at the account Sambo had given of his capture and his own experience on the occasion.

"I fear that our numerous leaves of absence will be at an end now very soon," said Gooch, who had called with his colonel.

"Indeed!" exclaimed both girls at once; "why?"

"The Yankees are said to be moving in the direction of Petersburg this evening," answered Randolph, "and if that is the case I expect that we, too, will be moved somewhere in that neighborhood."

"Good-bye to all our pleasant evenings and our charming club parties," said Gooch, with a sigh. "You have no idea what an amount of work has been accomplished this winter, colonel," he continued, in a teazing tone, as he glanced at Carrie. "The Sockdolager Club has provided one entire division with socks, have they not, Miss Carrie?"

"Not exactly, Mr. Gooch; we have not accomplished as much as we hoped to do," answered Carrie, a little worried to be reminded that they had not effected all they had undertaken.

"I think it would be a good idea," said Belle, coming to her assistance, "if the infantry could all be taught to knit for themselves, and spend their odd moments in providing for their own comfort.'

"Then you think we should be reduced to the *sole* amusement of knitting socks, Miss Belle? That would be cruel in two ways, first, in imposing on us such a task, and then in depriving the fair sex of so much melancholy pleasure," answered Gooch, laughing.

"Really, Mr. Gooch," said Belle, "I might feel inclined to applaud your pun, bad as it is, were it not followed with such egotism, but I shall vote your claim on the Sockdolager Club as void if you so quietly appropriate our services in that way."

"And I will retaliate," he retorted, laughing, "by telling of the departure you made from the rules of the organization, in the shape of a smoking cap. Some poor fellow had the *wool* pulled over his eyes in a shameful way, colonel. Indeed, it's questionable," he continued, turning to Carrie, "whether this club gives as much aid and comfort as it causes jealousy."

"It must be quite pleasant to be *hoodwinked* in such a way," said Randolph, much amused at the lively tilt between Belle and Gooch; "I should not object to it myself."

"I will do a smoking-cap for you, colonel," said Carrie, while Belle looked a little confused.

"Thank you, Miss Carrie," replied Randolph, gravely; "if I had remained in prison much longer, I am afraid I should have been forgotten by all my friends."

Belle bent lower over the work she was doing, not seeming to have heard the last remark. Presently Randolph came over and took his seat very near her, leaving Gooch and Carrie together.

"What are you doing, Miss Belle?" he asked, "that seems of such absorbing interest? Is it another smoking-cap?"

"Does this look like a cap?" she queried, holding up her work; "I never mean to do another," she added, earnestly.

"Are they very difficult to accomplish?"

"O, no; they are simple enough."

"Why, then, will you never do another?" persisted he.

"I have very good reasons," she answered, mysteriously.

"And won't tell me even one?" said Randolph, in pathetic tones.

"Well, I have no more worsted; is not that reason enough?" she replied.

Randolph looked at her steadily, and she dropped her eyes under his scrutiny.

"I read the most charming little book," he continued, presently, "while I was at Johnston's Island. I wish you could see

it. It was a collection of sketches by Curtis, 'Prue and I.' One of them, 'Titbottom's Spectacles,' struck me especially. They were a wonderful pair, through which you saw a typical embodiment of the person at whom you looked. Directly I read it I thought of you; and now, this moment, I would give worlds to peep at you through those mysterious glasses."

Belle worked away vigorously.

"I am glad that you haven't them," she said, presently, "but it would not make any difference, I am sure."

"You have not told me yet for whom you did the smoking-cap," said Randolph; "are you not going to tell me?"

"Why, certainly; why shouldn't I? But tell me more of those wonderful spectacles," she continued, blushing a little; "where can I get the book?"

"I fear it is not to be had in the Confederacy. It was only published a short time before the war. I don't know really whether the possessor of such wonderful diviners would be most happy or miserable. In the instance recorded, I think he became a misanthrope. If one had a happy suspicion that he occupied even a very small place in the heart of one he loved, it might be dangerous to investigate too fully," said Randolph, meaningly.

Belle bent over her work again.

"One, two, three," she repeated, as earnestly as if the fate of the Confederacy depended upon her faithful count. Randolph had never said so much to her before, and she scarcely knew what she answered.

"I wish I could get the spectacles in Richmond," she tried to say calmly; "that is, I mean the book," she added, with confusion.

Randolph looked amused, and evidently enjoyed her embarrassment, as he said, "I have tried all the book-stores here, but can not find a copy. I suppose we shall have to wait till the war is over for that, too. But please put up that never-ending

work and talk to me. Is this the way to treat me when I have been so long away and in prison?"

But Belle persisted in her work. Presently, Randolph reached forth his hand and gently took it from her, with little resistance on her part. She raised her eyes to his as he did so, and he felt that "Titbottom's spectacles" were not needed to read the earnest love which for a moment they expressed.

An oppressive silence ensued for a few moments, and Randolph's face became quite grave with the thoughts which occupied him. Finally he asked:

"You believe in the immortality of the soul, do you not, Miss Belle?"

"What possesses you to ask such a question as that, Colonel Randolph? You know I do," said Belle, in a tone of disappointment. "Can any one doubt it?"

"You would be surprised to know how many do: of course, I do not. To what anchor could our frail humanity cling, were it not for that?" said Randolph, solemnly.

"Please do not talk in this strain. I'll take up my work again, if you do."

"You must excuse me, but you know a soldier is so often brought face to face with the question and those that come in its train. You have no idea of all that a man sacrifices when he faces the enemy's bullets day after day. There should be great compensation for it, in the event of death. The old Greek faith was certainly a very consoling one, on that subject."

"Colonel Randolph, what makes you talk so strangely to-night?" asked Belle, anxiously.

"The most distressing part about it, is that I can not tell you; *you* least of all," he added, earnestly.

"I do remember your telling me once, that a mystery delighted a woman more than anything else, but let me tell you that she don't enjoy it a bit, unless she is a party to it," said Belle, trying to rally him.

"Everything is a mystery. Life, the greatest mystery of all, and war, the most horrible reality that ever cursed a nation," said Randolph, excitedly.

"I am really becoming frightened," said Belle, in tones of mock alarm, "I believe you have a fever."

"I have, and I think it will consume me."

"Why don't you take some medicine?" said Belle, now really alarmed. "Let me tell mother," and she arose, as if to go.

"O, no," he answered, "there is nothing that she can do for me," and he laughed a hollow sort of a laugh. "Sit down by me, here, and tell me the name of the lucky fellow that received the cap at your hands?"

"Certainly," she replied, glad to do anything to restore Randolph to his wonted good humor. "I made it for Major Anderson, of the Laurel Brigade; do you know him?"

"Yes, I know him," he answered, shortly. "Did he ask you to do it?"

"Of course, I should not have done it otherwise."

"Then, why don't my asking produce a like result?" said Randolph, almost fiercely.

"Did not Carrie say she would make you one?" asked Belle, demurely.

"I don't care for one from anybody but yourself."

"I will do it then," said Belle, softly.

"You angel!" he whispered, passionately, and, rising hastily from his seat, called to Gooch, that it was time for them to return to camp, and, bidding their friends good-night, they were soon on their way back to their dismal quarters.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE long and faithful vigils, which were kept by Appleton at the bedside of his invalid father, were at last abruptly brought to a sad termination, after weeks of alternating hope and fear.

Expecting to embark for Europe, immediately after his marriage with Pauline, he only awaited a decided change in his father's condition, before carrying out his plans, but he was scarcely prepared for action, now that the critical moment had come.

The last sad offices were performed, and business connected with the deceased man's large estate occupied all his thoughts for awhile longer, then he wrote Pauline, telling her of his bereavement, and saying that he "should now hasten to her side, and from her he felt confident that he should receive the loving sympathy which his heart craved."

It is impossible to describe the mingled feelings in Pauline's heart, which the reception of this letter occasioned.

As long as a feeling of uncertainty was associated with her marriage to Appleton, she contemplated the prospect with a vague sense of pleasure, but this letter placed the matter upon a footing of absolute certainty, and, before long, he would be in Richmond, to claim her plighted hand. "Was she, indeed, ready to forsake all others and cleave only unto him, leave all behind, indefinitely? Why could he not wait until the war should be over?"

The air was full of rumors of the approaching campaign; the lines were being drawn tighter and tighter, and all the ghastly signs of an early engagement between the two armies, before the capital, might be noticed.

There was barely time for a letter to reach him before he

should start from Washington, but she would write it. Upon that she finally resolved.

"You have my deepest sympathies in your bereavement, believe me," so ran her letter, "but I hope you will not be greatly disappointed when I tell you that I have decided to postpone matters for the present. To be candid, I fear that I really did not know my own mind when I acceded to your request for a speedy marriage.

"In short, it is impossible for you to know all that actuates me in this decision, but I am persuaded it is best for both, that our engagement should terminate for the present. When you come back to this country, you will come to see me, will you not? For I earnestly hope that ere long an honorable peace may be accorded us.

"Do not think me heartless, to write you thus in your grief. It pains me to do so, but I am sure it is best. With my earnest wishes for a prosperous and safe voyage, farewell.

"PAULINE."

She sat holding the letter before her, after the last word was written. "How cold it seems, and how unfeeling he will think me," she said to herself, as she read it over again, "but how much better thus than—" and she shuddered, as she thought how near she had been to taking the irrevocable step. "Can it be that I have deceived myself? The words of Major Hughes, which, at the time, seemed incoherent and presumptuous, have recurred to me so often, lately. What is it to me, if Charlie Holmes *is* fascinated by Miss Campbell. It should not make any difference, but it *does*. If I had not seen him absolutely devoted to another, in my very presence, I might not have been disturbed in my dream, but. now, when the test comes, I am not equal to it."

A letter came to her from Appleton in a shorter time than she expected.

"Your letter, Pauline, reached me very soon after it left your hand, while I waited here in Washington for one which I fondly hoped would bring me tidings of a different nature. Ah, well! I am only surprised that I ever allowed myself to depend so certainly upon so happy a consummation of my hopes.

"I realize, now, that I asked a great deal of you, though not more than I was willing to concede. I have accepted an appointment on a foreign mission which will detain me abroad for several months. As soon, however, as I return, I shall remind you, in person, of your implied promise, if it costs all that I am worth. I sail from New York, on the 10th, for Liverpool.

"Of my wretched disappointment, it is useless, now, to speak, nor of the fear which haunts me, that an evil fate will yet cheat me of all that I hold dear on earth, but enough of my gloomy forebodings. As it will be impossible to get a letter to you during my absence, I must bid you a long farewell, and it seems that a prophetic shadow of evil spreads its wings above me as I write these words, which I find so hard to bring to an end. God grant that it may be averted from your head or heart, since I am to be denied the privilege of sharing either good or ill fortune with my only love, and, once again, farewell.

"Yours, EDWARD APPLETON."

A strange tight feeling was at Pauline's heart as she read these words over and over again, and she gazed long at the lines before her. Presently, a tear stole silently down her face, then another and another, until the flood-gates seemed open, and the long and passionate fit of weeping which followed seemed to relieve her heart and mind of a burden that had rested there for many months, and she came forth from the crisis more like her old self than she had been for some time.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

URGENT letters to Belle, from relatives in Lexington, now claimed a long-promised visit, and, with the opening of spring's first flowers, she left the crowded capital with little regret. Connection by rail having been interrupted by a raiding party from Grant's army, but one route remained open, and that by way of the James river canal, which traversed the country from Richmond to the upper waters of North river. The slow and tedious route was, however, rendered much less irksome than it would otherwise have been by the beautiful and varied scenery which soon presented itself on every side.

After leaving the low, flat country, through which the muddy waters of the lower James finds its way, in the dim distance a hazy outline of deep blue gradually becomes more perceptible, until the passengers of the snail-like craft begin to realize that the picturesque Blue Ridge is before them, which looms up more and more distinct in its budding beauty, until, at last, they find themselves surrounded on all sides by the mountains, and soon overhanging their very heads as they crawl along through the narrow, shadowy passage.

Some wonderful power, in the distant ages, must have lent its force to the waters at this point, which have made for themselves a sure aqueduct, leaving the giant hills, on either side, grim and silent witnesses of the deed for all time. Soon emerging from the darkness and gloom of this mountain pass, they enter the cool, clear waters of North river, which, running along the base of the Blue Ridge for some distance, lands them, on the evening of the third day, at their point of destination.

A ense of great relief takes possession of Belle, as her foot once more treads *terra firma*, and she finds her cousin, Mrs. Davis, and her two little boys waiting to receive her.

"How delightful, dear cousin Kate," exclaimed Belle, "to breathe the pure air of my own beautiful Valley once more; and I am certain that I shall need no rocking to-night, to insure my rest, for a feeling of great insecurity disturbed me on the boat."

"I can imagine," answered her cousin, laughing, "that a tour by way of the canal would be anything else but pleasant, but I hope you bring us good news from Richmond, for, ever since the railroad has been cut, we hear very indirectly from there."

"When I left, three days ago, there was every indication that the spring campaign would soon open; the orders were very strict about the soldiers coming into the city, and I know that the troops were massing in front of Richmond."

"Do you think the Yankees will ever get there, cousin Belle?" asked Archy, the eldest of the little boys, as he trudged along by her side.

"If you could go around the fortifications, Archy, and see all the big guns, pointing in every direction, as I did a few evenings before I left there, I think you would agree with me that Richmond was quite safe," answered Belle.

"By the way," she continued, turning to Mrs. Davis, "when did you hear from your husband, cousin Kate?"

"I heard yesterday, Belle, and I am sorry to say that he is not at all well," answered her cousin; "indeed, he fears that he will be compelled to leave his command, unless there is a decided improvement in his condition, shortly, and that, you know, is a great mortification to him, just as the campaign is about to open, though I must confess that it will be a great relief to me to have him at home, and I shall regard it as an evidence of providential care, if it is in the line of his duty. I await the news of every battle in fear and trembling, and know not when my little fellows here may be left fatherless, though I would not keep him back, if in health," she added, as she brushed away a tear.

"Papa says if the Yankees shoot him, I am to take care of

you, mamma," said Archy, coming to the front again, with an important air.

"I wish I was big enough to fight, too," said little Harry. "I know they will kill all the Yankees before I can get a pop at 'em," he added, in mournful tones.

"God grant that it may be over, long before you are old enough to go, my son!" exclaimed his mother, fervently.

Their walk from the boat now came to an end, as they had reached Mrs. Davis' house, which lay on the outskirts of the picturesque town of Lexington.

Retiring early, Belle found herself awake at a correspondingly early hour, and was lured to the window by the sweet chorus of birds, with which the air resounded, every leafy recess seeming to be occupied by the feathered songsters. Away off from her window, to the right, stretched a field of apple blossom in different stages of development, steeping the early morning air with its delicious odor, and giving promise of abundant harvest.

The eastern sky blushingly announced the approach of morn, and soon

> "Jocund day stood, tip-toe,
> On the misty mountain top."

Belle drank in the scene greedily, every breath seeming freighted with the elixir of health and new life, doubly appreciated after the close, crowded atmosphere of the camp-environed capital.

As Mrs. Davis expected, her husband soon made his appearance at home, and his flushed face and sunken eye told that typhoid fever had laid its hand upon him. The worst of it was over, though, before he could be persuaded to leave camp, and he now counted the weary days of convalescence with ill-restrained impatience.

The news soon came, too, of the advance of the "Grand Army" before Richmond, and then followed the sickening reports of "heavy battles, with great losses on both sides."

Nothing to do now but to wait and pray, and wonder why they were so afflicted.

Belle bears the agony of suspense in silence; she scarcely admits to herself, even, that fears for Randolph's safety are paramount in her breast, though a certain little feeling of resentment does mingle with her anxiety, as she recalls several occasions when the words she hoped to hear seemed trembling on his lips, and yet some mysterious influence withheld their utterance.

Why this *was* so, she could not understand, but, all the same, she dreaded to see the list of "killed and wounded."

Just about this time, too, came the tidings of the rapid advance of the enemy up the Valley, under Hunter, and the reports of the terrible work they were doing reached the citizens of Lexington in every exaggerated form.

This point had, all along, seemed so inaccessible, that the inhabitants had deemed themselves secure against invasion, but now the enemy is rapidly advancing, indeed, almost at their doors, and only a very small force intervening. Captain Davis, still confined to the house, spent his time and thoughts in planning a mode of escape, if the dreaded foe should, indeed, reach this point.

The small army opposing the rapid march of Hunter's troops is retreating, and at nightfall they camp on the opposite side of the river. Of course, the people are now convinced that it is but a question of time, and prepare themselves to expect the worst. Captain Davis, chafed at the possible prospect of being captured, was rendered entirely unfit for the escape he had planned, but his wife, anxious to have him go, agreed to stand guard on an outside porch all night* and report the first sounds that indicated a movement of the troops in the neighborhood.

The ambulance that was to carry him stood ready harnessed, and the driver, also a convalescent soldier, lay sleeping on the parlor floor. A stillness as of death hung over the doomed town, with only the fitful gleam of a distant camp-fire to light

*Actual experience of a young lady in Lexington, Virginia.

the gloom. All night long Mrs. Davis paced her beat, leaving it only for an occasional visit to the bedside of her husband, who had donned his well-worn uniform to be ready for a hasty retreat, and now lay quietly sleeping.

CONFEDERATE CANDLE.

The dim light of a Confederate candle faintly illumined the apartment, casting weird arabesques on the wall near, as it sputtered and flickered with its uncertain light. Among other homely inventions, which the necessities of the times produced, was this famous candle. It consisted of a wick, varying in length from thirty to forty feet, well covered with a preparation of wax and tallow. This, while yet warm and pliable, was twisted into all sorts of shapes around a stick eight or ten inches in length, which was firmly fixed in a block of wood.

It permitted considerable latitude to artistic taste, and often represented in its deftly-arranged coils flowers, and even musical instruments, besides many other objects. Their chief beauty, however, lay in the length of time they lasted and the small outlay necessary for their manufacture.

The brave sentinel kept her vigil faithfully, and with the first faint streaks of early dawn, she could distinguish sounds of bustle and motion in the camp below the town. The time had now

come to rouse her husband, and she approached his bedside in anxious fear. In a little while he was wide awake, and sat upright, but a sudden dizziness overcame him and he was obliged to recline again.

"Indeed, I do not think you can possibly undertake this trip, my dear husband," said his anxious wife.

"Oh, I shall do very well," he answered, "if I can but once get into the ambulance," and arose again to make the effort; "lend me your shoulder, Kate," he added.

This time he got to his feet and with his wife's assistance almost to the door, though with tottering tread. The heavy rumble of the wagons was now distinctly heard as nearer they approached, and Captain Davis, making a desperate effort, finally succeeded in getting to the door, but as he did so reeled and fell, proving his total inability to undertake the proposed trip. By their united efforts he once more regained his bed and resigned himself as best he could to the disappointment, determining, however, to secrete himself somewhere at the last moment. Mrs. Davis now aroused the comrade who lay sleeping in the parlor, and who was to drive the ambulance to a place of safety, till the army had passed.

"Kate, have you packed everything that might tempt the cupidity of the advancing heroes," he asked, with an attempt at a smile.

"Yes," she answered, "everything that I have not hidden in secure places about the house; the only thing that is left, and which I can't conceal, is a suit of cadet uniform and a roll of grey cloth, but Belle will wear the suit under her dress, and I am going to appear presently as a very fat lady, for I mean to wrap that cloth around my body, under my hoops, as I am determined the Yankees shan't have it."

"I am afraid you will suffer terribly with the heat, and be willing to hand over the grey cloth by night," he answered.

Just then appeared the advance of the handful of men who

had stood between them and the enemy, rapidly retreating, and in a short time they had all passed by. The citizens who had collected to see them pass, and offer them what they could in the way of refreshment, now looked at each other in silent despair. Not a shadow of hope remained, while even the courage born of despair seemed at first to forsake them.

One by one they silently withdrew to their own homes, until the streets became entirely deserted and silence reigned supreme. A prophetic stillness brooded over all; the calm, which always precedes the storm. No one now stirred beyond his own door. They were about to enter upon an untried experience, with every reason to dread it. Every house was closed with blinds drawn down, and a sullen front exposed to the view of the expected foe.

Two hours passed thus—three—"Can it be possible," said Mrs. Davis to her husband, "that the Yankees are going around us by some other road?" and faint hope began to dawn within her.

"Indeed, I think, too, that they have had time to get here, if they are coming," said Belle, always glad to accept the most cheerful aspect of things.

"That is a big army coming up the Valley," said Captain Davis; "they can't move with quite the same speed as the handful that passed here this morning."

He sat in an easy chair near the window, waiting for the first intimation of their arrival, that he might betake himself to the security of the hiding-place agreed upon between his wife and himself. Presently the sharp, shrill scream of a shell passing through the air and bursting in their neighborhood arrested their attention.

"Ha! there they are!" said Captain Davis; "that is their usual mode of salutation. To the cellar! quick! here, Kate!"

And as one after another they now heard shells bursting, there was no longer any doubt as to their near approach. Both Mrs.

Davis and Belle came to the assistance of the invalid, but a sudden strength seemed given him, and his one idea was to get them all to the cellar as quickly as possible.

They had scarcely reached there before they observed the house opposite to be on fire, and in an unwary moment they all congregated around the window to view it. Now they observed a shell strike the ground in front of the house.

"Come this way, quick!" called Captain Davis, and they rushed to the farthest corner of the room, but had scarcely done so before the window where they had been standing was struck by the fragments of the bursting shell and shattered to pieces. After a time the shelling ceased, and once more they ventured to the window. Some distance down the street could be seen a small white flag, which had been hoisted by a citizen as an intimation to the foe that no masked batteries or ambushed forces awaited their entrance into the town, hoping thereby to stay further destruction of private property.

"You had better come now, my husband," said Mrs. Davis, eagerly, and telling the little boys to remain with Belle, she hurriedly left them.

In the rear of the house was the kitchen, whose immense, old-fashioned fireplace had long since fallen into disuse, and for many years previous to the war had been closed up; but such had been Mrs. Davis' necessities during the past year that she was obliged to open it again and resort to the primitive and inconvenient modes of our grandmothers in the preparation of her meals. To this kitchen she now hurried her husband.

"Ah! Kate," he exclaimed, "I knew your fertile brain would suggest something that could be relied on; they will never find me here in the world. But if they stay very long what will you do about cooking?"

"I have arranged for all that," she said, triumphantly; "I have had everything in the house cooked; have at least three days rations ahead, so you see I am prepared for a siege."

Captain Davis now commenced his ascent into the hospitable throat of the old chimney, and before many seconds the last vestige of his boots had disappeared.

"Do you think you can stand it?" asked his wife, as she peeped up from below.

"O, it is quite comfortable, I assure you, barring a little soot," he answered, laughing.

Just then Belle's voice was heard in a low whisper: "Come quick, Cousin Kate," and Mrs. Davis made haste to place the furniture in its usual fashion, when another and a strange voice sounded in her ears. She now returned at once to the house, her heart in her mouth. Belle stood in the door, and before it was an officer and two or three soldiers. The officer, however, had dismounted and stood respectfully holding his hat in hand.

"Excuse me, Miss Harvey," Mrs. Davis heard him say, as she approached, "I heard that you were in Lexington and rode ahead of my command to be of any assistance that I could."

"I appreciate your kindness, Captain King," said Belle, recognizing the officer who had befriended them before, but not inviting him in or extending her hand in welcome; "from the experience of the past two hours, we will probably be glad to have *any* protection," she added, bitterly.

"Coming on such an errand, I might look for a warmer welcome," he said, half angrily.

"That you came at all, in such company, is cause for grave fears, sir, I think," she answered, boldly.

"Madam," said Captain King, determined not to be rebuffed, and turning to Mrs. Davis, "I would gladly afford Miss Harvey and all her friends any protection in my power, and I fear that you will stand in need of all that I can offer."

Just then a lurid glare in the direction of the Virginia Military Institute shot up into the heavens, and one after another the flames rose higher, until the devouring element seemed sweeping everything before it.

"What, oh! what can it be?" asked Mrs. Davis.

"Do tell us!" exclaimed Belle.

"Ladies, I am sorry to say that Hunter has ordered the burning of all the Institute property, to what end, I confess I fail to see, but I would gladly remain at your house, and protect from insult or injury all under your roof. Will you not allow me?" and saying this, he advanced within the door.

Belle and Mrs. Davis looked at each other, scarcely knowing what to say. At this point, the two little boys, who had retreated to the nursery, now returned, each armed with a toy gun.

"Let me beseech you to accept my protection, madam," he said, earnestly, addressing Mrs. Davis.

Harry, not understanding the nature of the visit at all, now advanced, in a warlike attitude.

"Let my mamma alone, or I'll shoot you," he said, seeming glad of the opportunity to put in practice a long-cherished desire.

"Hush, my son," said Mrs. Davis, "this gentleman is very kind; you must not talk of shooting him," at which Harry and Archy exchanged puzzled glances, totally unable to reconcile the appearance of things with their mother's words.

"It would be ungrateful to refuse your kindness, sir," continued Mrs. Davis, addressing Captain King, "and I will accept it in the spirit in which it is proffered."

Turning to the soldiers he dismissed them, and now entered the house.

"I tried very hard to prevent the shelling of this place, Miss Harvey," he said, "but finding that I could not, I left my command and rode as fast as I could to reach here as soon as possible, that I might be some protection to you and your friends, and I confess that I should have been greatly mortified to have been denied that privilege."

The little boys, who had gone into the yard, now came running in with the news that the yard "was full of Yankees, kitchen, and everywhere."

Mrs. Davis, in terror, flew to the kitchen. Sure enough, there they were, prying into every nook and corner. Captain King, who had also heard the children, had followed her, and at sight of one of their officers, they soon began to skulk away, and the yard was soon cleared. Mrs. Davis now began to realize how fortunate she was in having his protection, but her terror, lest her husband's hiding-place might yet be discovered, increased every moment, and she determined, in consideration of Captain King's presence, to secrete him somewhere in the house as soon as night fell. Their protector soon announced that it was necessary for him to return to his command for a short while; so, in order to be back before dark, he decided to set out at once.

Both Mrs. Davis and Belle, now full of apprehension, showed plainly their anxiety for his speedy return, and, with a pleased smile, he rode rapidly away, after promising not to absent himself longer than was absolutely necessary.

Full of uneasiness about her husband, Mrs. Davis, after consulting with Belle, concluded it would probably be best to go to the kitchen and seem to be busying herself about some household work; not entirely satisfied though, that she had selected the best plan for his protection, after being there for awhile, she went into the yard.

Casting her eyes in the direction of the gate, she beheld several soldiers advancing. In utter dismay, she stood still, hoping her presence would prevent their entering, but she had miscalculated; the side gate opened, and in they came, some half-dozen hungry-looking private soldiers, rude and uncouth-looking in the extreme.

"Say, sis," said the foremost one, advancing, "hain't you got something you can give a fellow to eat? We are as hungry as the devil himself."

"Of course she'll give us a good hot supper ef you plank up the chink," said another, persuasively.

Mrs. Davis stood transfixed to the spot, and for a moment

speechless. Her cheeks glowed crimson, and her head reeled with indignation and fear.

"What must I say to these wretches?" she thought, while visions of her husband being roasted alive tortured her brain.

"I have no supper to give you," she presently said, as calmly as she could, fearing to express all the defiance she felt.

"Come, now, honey, that won't do, we hain't a goin' to run off without paying ye for it," said one of them, taking a greenback from his pocket and holding it toward Mrs. Davis.

"I tell you," she faltered again, "I have no supper for you."

"Ah, now, be a good sis, an' hurry up an' git the supper. I'll even so much es chop the wood fur ye," said another, going toward the woodpile, near.

A new fear now seized upon Mrs. Davis; she knew that if her husband heard the insulting language of these men that he would come to her side if it was the last act of his life. So, she hurriedly concluded it would be best to seem to accede to their wishes, praying that Captain King would return in the meantime.

*At this juncture Belle made her appearance in the door, which was the signal for a volley of admiring expressions.

"But ain't she a daisy?" said one.

"Can't you come an' help us git a good, hot supper?" said another, advancing toward Belle. "We're a-goin' to pay ye fur it—they hain't nothin' mean about us," and with that they all laughed loudly.

Belle's indignation now expressed itself in words.

"What right have you to come here and demand supper? Unless you get out of this yard at once you will surely repent it."

"Whoopy! she's a gittin' mad," said one, seemingly amused.

"Ef you won't give us nothin'," said another, "'sposen we'll have to help erselves. Wher's the kitchen?"

By this time Mrs. Davis was so terror-stricken as to be almost paralyzed, and Belle continued her efforts to get rid of them.

"I tell you that we have nothing to give you, and there

*Experience of a young lady in Winchester.

is nothing for you to steal, and unless you go away at once I will report you at the provost's office." She tried to be very brave, but her heart sank within her when the roughest-looking one among them advanced toward her menacingly.

"Let's steal her, I say."

"Dat be von good von," said a bloated Dutchman, also coming nearer. They seemed, now, to have forgotten supper.

Deriving courage from her very despair, she said, appealingly:

"Is there not *one* man among you that will protect a defenseless woman?" She observed one nearest the gate leave the crowd hurriedly, which gave her a ray of hope, while her appeal seemed to bring them all to their senses again. They stood in silence for a few minutes, then once more renewed their importunities for supper.

It seemed to Mrs. Davis and Belle an age, but, in reality, it was a very short time, before the one who had left was seen approaching at a double-quick with a guard of two armed men, and soon the disorderly crowd was dispersed, to their unspeakable relief. Captain King soon returned again, and heard, with great indignation, of the insulting language and conduct of the soldiers. Mrs. Davis managed to bring her husband from his hiding-place after nightfall and secrete him within the house, where he remained, undisturbed, until the army once more took up its line of march, the Federal officer's presence in the house, unconsciously, affording him protection.

The excitement of the situation, however, rendered him quite ill again, and it was some time before he was able to rejoin his command. Even after all his kindness, Belle could not bring herself to shake hands with Captain King, when, a few days later, he came to bid them good-bye.

"Not until you stand before me in a full suit of grey, captain," she said, laughing.

"You are a very great demoralizer, certainly, Miss Harvey, but I can't promise you that," he answered, and soon rode away.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE last summer of the war was made memorable by the numerous successful raids on the part of the Federal troops. So emboldened were they by their success in this line, that they gradually extended their circuits until Sherman's never-to-be-forgotten march struck a death blow to the struggling Confederacy.

The most sanguine were still hopeful of ultimate success, but those who knew best had very grave fears. Grant was, in the language of his illustrious chief, "still pegging away" before Richmond, and, while he had not achieved any brilliant or decided result, he had, at least, not met with the same disastrous defeats as his numerous predecessors. He had plenty of men and means, and the life-blood of the young Confederacy had already begun to ebb.

All hope of returning to their Valley home had been abandoned by Mrs. Harvey, as the recent destruction of property by both Hunter and Sheridan had left no unoccupied houses standing, and those who had persisted in remaining lived in constantly-increasing terror. About this time news came to Mrs. Harvey of the death of poor "Aunt Maria," who could never be persuaded to leave her home, but had remained to the last, kindly cared for by the faithful Dinah, who had not yet made up her mind to take advantage of her freedom.

With the coming of winter again, the capital was once more thronged, and provisions became very scarce and high-priced, as well as lodging-places almost impossible to find. It seemed to be regarded as a place of perfect security against the enemy, notwithstanding the efforts made for its capture, while, among the young and thoughtless portion of the community, the gayeties of the previous winter were again inaugurated.

Belle had returned from her prolonged visit to Lexington, and soon found that it would be necessary to follow Carrie's example, and find employment in one of the departments of the Government, whose army of male clerks had been enlisted for more dangerous service in the field.

"I do not intend to join the Starvation Club, this winter," she said to Carrie, as they walked along the street on their way to their duties.

"I do not think I shall, either," replied Carrie, "it really seems heartless to be so gay when there is so much suffering around us."

"Pauline, of course, will not," continued Belle, "now that she is in such deep mourning, poor thing!"

"No, indeed! I expect she will be occupied a good deal with her poor mother, who, they say, is broken-hearted, and, at times, quite out of her mind."

"Such a grief as that is enough to craze her," said Belle, "to have her two sons brought home together on one bier. They had passed unharmed through so much danger, too, and were so brave. Poor Mrs. Rhett! I do, indeed, feel for her."

"Just suppose," continued Carrie, "that Pauline had married Mr. Appleton and gone abroad, how could she ever have forgiven herself, now that this grief has overtaken them?"

"I am sure there was always danger of it, and I could never altogether forgive Pauline for contemplating it during the war," said Belle, with energy. "It remains to be seen what she will do now. I have had very little conversation with her since my return, and Appleton's name was not mentioned."

"You'd be surprised, Belle," said Carrie, smilingly, "if I told you how affairs stood, for you know that Pauline never told me, and yet I know exactly the relation between herself and Mr. Appleton. I have never mentioned it before, because of the manner in which I learned it, but I am sure that Pauline will be only too glad to tell you as soon as a good opportunity offers."

"You are certainly dealing in mysteries, Carrie; pray explain yourself," said Belle.

"Well, you know," rejoined Carrie, "that until you came back I had a position in the *Flag of Truce* office, and one of my duties was to read some of the letters that passed; so, greatly to my surprise, one morning, I opened one from Pauline to Ed Appleton. Of course, I read it with a good deal of interest, and, Belle, I am convinced that Pauline loves Charlie Holmes. At any rate, she has broken her engagement with Appleton."

"It does seem a pity that a girl could not know her own mind better than she appears to have done," said Belle. "Even if she had loved Appleton before the war, brought up as she has been, how she could have been willing to marry him and go abroad while the war lasted I can't understand at all."

"Well, you know *I* never did think that Pauline had much heart, Belle, but since reading that letter I have a better opinion of her. I don't know what infatuation possessed her to carry matters so far, or what her parents could have been thinking of to give their consent," said Carrie. "Marrying a man that your family had never even seen was bad enough, but under such circumstances I confess it puzzles me."

"That is where they showed their wisdom, I believe, now. They knew Pauline better than any one else, and thought it best not to oppose her, hoping it would have the effect which it seems to have had, and I sincerely hope that your suspicions are correct." They now reached a gloomy old building, which was occupied as the Treasury Department, and soon both girls were bending over their desks signing names to "a promise to pay," which was before very long, however, though through no fault of theirs, to become a worthless bond.

A few evenings after, as Belle was going home alone from the Department, she heard a familiar footstep rapidly approaching behind, and, presently, the manly voice of Randolph sounded in her ear.

"I am very lucky to have found you, Miss Belle," he said. "I have just been to call at your rooms."

Belle looked up with a pleased expression of surprise, as she extended her hand in welcome.

"I am too sorry to have missed you," she said, with unconscious emphasis.

"Ah! but you have not missed me," returned Randolph. "I am going back with you, if you will allow me. I haven't fought the whole Army of Northern Virginia for my furlough, to be cheated out of the enjoyment of it in any such way," he continued.

"When did you get here?" ventured Belle.

"About two hours ago, and am only allowed twenty-four hours in the city, altogether, so you see why my moments are so precious?"

"Did you bring Colonel Holmes with you this time?" she asked, presently.

"No, indeed, and I have not seen him for some time. He is no longer Colonel Holmes, but a brigadier—he traveled up rapidly this summer. I have seen him only once since his promotion, and then he was in hot pursuit of the Yankees. But tell me when you got back to Richmond? I heard only the other day that you had returned."

"O, I have been here for some weeks," she replied, with the least little bit of coolness in her tone, for she had frequently wondered what had become of Randolph, though angry with herself all the while, that she did care. She had quite made up her mind that when she met him again she would not extend as cordial a greeting as had been her wont, but the suddenness of his appearance had prevented her putting into action her resolve, and she was glad to see him in spite of herself.

Upon reaching home, they found Julia Campbell and Major Hughes, who had called to invite Carrie and Belle to a little re-union at her home that evening. Of course, Randolph was

gladly welcomed, and included in the invitation, but he postponed answering until he should hear Belle's reply.

"I am too sorry, Julia, but a previous engagement will prevent my accepting your invitation, though I am sure I shall be greatly the loser by it," she said.

Julia and Hughes exchanged significant glances, as Randolph declined upon the same plea.

They soon took their departure, and Randolph and Belle were left alone.

"You can't imagine what a thrill of delight possessed me, Miss Belle, when you declined Miss Julia's invitation upon the plea of a 'previous engagement,'" said Randolph, in pleased tones. "Of course, if you had gone, I should have accepted the invitation and gone, too; but, to think, that of your own accord, you would remain at home and spend the evening with me gives me inexpressible pleasure."

"I think you must have misunderstood me, Colonel Randolph," said Belle, apparently surprised, and coloring. "I told Julia the truth, when I said I had a previous engagement, but I certainly had no right to assume that it could be with you, even if it had not already existed with some one else."

"Didn't I tell you that I had but twenty-four hours to spend in Richmond, and where else, would you suppose, could I wish to spend my time, except in your society?" asked Randolph, almost impatiently; "and with whom, if I may ask, does your engagement for this evening exist?"

"I have promised to go with Major Anderson to the levee at the President's," she answered, a little nervously.

"Major Anderson," exclaimed Randolph, "why, how long has he been here? I thought he was with Rosser, in West Virginia. That is where he ought to be."

"He has been here since the day before yesterday."

"And, notwithstanding all the trouble I have been at to get this one evening with you, I am to be cheated out of it by this

fellow, Anderson. Couldn't you postpone your engagement with him, or would you show me that preference?" he added, in lower tones.

"I am sure it is entirely unintentional on his part," said Belle, evasively, "as well as my own, and if I had only known—" but here she paused.

"Only known what? Go on," said Randolph, eagerly.

"Well, if I had only known about Julia inviting us there."

"The quiet evening at home, with only me for your companion, then, was not in your thoughts at all?" said Randolph.

"I did not say that, and you have no right to interpret my thoughts for me."

"No, I have no right, that is true," he said, sadly, "and I am a fool for thinking that I have any claim upon you."

The soft glow of the open fire was now the only light in the room, and it was too dim for Randolph to see the confusion in Belle's manner, though he was looking steadily at her.

"You will always have the claim of an old and valued friend, be assured of that," said Belle, demurely, determined not to give him the least advantage.

"I suppose I shall have to content myself with that," he answered, resolutely. "And you will not postpone your engagement with Anderson?" he added.

"I do not really see how I can," she replied, "as he, also, leaves to-morrow."

The other members of the family now came in to welcome Randolph; and, tea soon being announced, he remained to share it with them, and so the time passed until Major Anderson arrived to fulfill his engagement with Belle.

"I shall be here in the morning to walk with you to the Treasury Department, unless Major Anderson is ahead of me there, also," he managed to whisper to Belle, before she left.

"O, no, he is not, and I shall expect you," she answered.

While Belle was glad, at first, to have the opportunity of

showing Randolph that her time was not always at his disposal, yet her companion did not find her so entirely amiable and agreeable as he usually did. In reality, she would have given a great deal to have spent the evening with only Randolph, in spite of the many incomprehensible things he said to her, for, in her inmost soul, she felt that he loved her.

Why he pursued the course he did was a mystery she could not fathom, puzzle over it as she might, and her maidenly instinct struggled to conceal from him the heart which was, nevertheless, his, for the simple asking.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WHEN Belle and Major Anderson reached the Presidential mansion, they were scarcely prepared for the unusual crowd with which the rooms were thronged, but it was soon explained by a friend who came up to them.

An anonymous communication had been received, warning the President that an attempt to assassinate him would be made during the evening. Mr. Davis, himself, scorned to notice it, but the presence of an unusual proportion of soldiers, who hovered around his vicinity during the evening, showed a determination to intercept any such attempt, should it be made.

The usually grave face of the chief is even graver, and more than three years seem to have passed since we last beheld him in these halls. Though the weight of his tremendous responsibility has deepened the lines around his noble brow, yet upon it is still stamped the high and lofty purpose to do his duty to the end, despite the envenomed shafts of disappointed politicians, which are constantly aimed at him, seeking to saddle upon him the misfortunes and false steps occasioned by others.

All unconscious he seems of the surveillance of his self-appointed body-guard, composed as it is of grim men in their well-worn uniforms, who happen to be in the capital at the time, whose faces though, are not wont to be seen in festive halls. But he is not unmindful or unappreciative of the love which prompts this watchful guardianship. The evening passes off, however, as usual, nothing occurring to justify the anonymous warning.

At Mrs. Harvey's invitation, Randolph returned to take breakfast with them, and walked with Belle to the Department. She strove to maintain a conversation upon indifferent topics, but Randolph was not to be baffled in his efforts to make her talk of Anderson.

"How often has he been in Richmond since you returned?" he persisted.

"Two or three times, I don't remember," said Belle, tantalizingly.

"I hope his visits did not make very much impression, then," he returned.

"Oh, he is usually very agreeable."

"Upon what topic is he most fluent; will you tell me that?" persisted Randolph.

"He does not confine himself to any one topic, I assure you; he was talking about the war last night, and expressing his admiration for Lee; then, too, he was telling me a great deal of the terrible condition of things in the dear, old Valley; he says it is the wildest scene of desolation and destruction that can be imagined."

"Well," laughed Randolph, "I would not have thought it possible to be so pleased to hear of the destruction in the Valley, but I should be happy to think that Anderson had entertained you with it the entire evening. As for myself, though, I shall try to forget it, at least, while I am with you. There is a part of Virginia, strange as it may seem, to which the enemy has never yet penetrated. It is the one comfort of my soldier life that my mother has never yet seen a Yankee, and most of her slaves are still with her, faithful as ever."

"I hope for her sake that it may continue to be the case."

"Indeed, I earnestly hope it, too, though not for her sake alone," he added, in significant tones, "and if you will but make me one promise more, before I leave you now in a few minutes, I shall go back to camp with a lighter heart, though God knows, there is little there to brighten it. I don't know when I may see you again."

"Don't talk so gloomily," said Belle, feelingly.

"Ah, Miss Belle, there is to be a fearful crisis in our affairs before long; there is no telling what will be the result. Heaven

knows when I may see you again, if ever. The odds are fearfully against us," and both walked on in silence, Belle with her eyes bent upon the ground and her heart beating violently.

"This much, at least, I may ask of you," said Randolph, and speaking with great effort at self-control, "that for one short year, no vow may bind you to another."

Belle did not answer at first, but looking up at him, she presently said, with an unsuccessful effort to smile:

"You assume that I am not already bound, then."

"Heaven forbid that you should be. You know that I love you, Belle," he went on, passionately, "and forgive me for the presumption, but I believe you care something for me"—here he paused—"I must speak it, I can not longer refrain, though so often resisting the impulse before. And now that I have spoken the words, I would not bind your loyal heart by any engagement; the chances of battle are so uncertain, and I love you too well to wish to shadow your future life. Unless I can brighten it, I want you to remember me only as the valued friend you spoke of last night. If I do not return—and but one thing will prevent it—forget that I have spoken thus, but I want you to visit my mother—she knows you well."

Very soon they reached the door of the Department, and still Belle had made no answer to this long speech of Randolph's.

"Good-bye," he said, as she put her hand confidingly in his, and "God bless you."

"And bring you safely back," she murmured, with suppressed feeling, "you will find me waiting."

With a desperate effort, Randolph dropped her hand and turned to go, and soon passed out of sight.

Belle was dazed; it had all been said so quickly and so unexpectedly that she scarcely realized what it meant, but how precious to her was the assurance of his love, and his reason for so persistently withholding its confession before was so characteristic.

"He *would* come back, she knew he would," and mechanically she ascended the long flight of steps before her.

Belle had seen very little of Pauline since her return, as Mrs. Rhett's failing health now required her daughter's constant attention. The shock, occasioned by the loss of her two sons, had paralyzed all her energies, and she was almost helpless.

Both had been shot in the same engagement the summer before, one instantly killed, while the other died from his wounds soon after, and before his parents could reach him.

Pauline had now told Belle of her attitude toward Appleton, and confessed, with many tears, that she had not known her own mind earlier; and she felt quite confident, too, after the way she had treated Charlie, that she would never see him again.

"It won't be my fault if you do not," said Belle, "for I expect he will be in the city shortly, and I shall consider it my bounden duty to tell him that you have at last recovered your senses."

"Indeed, Belle, you must promise me not to tell him one word that I have told you," said Pauline, with true feminine consistency.

"Oh, yes, I'll promise," said Belle, smiling mischievously, but whether she kept this promise or not, we will leave the reader to judge.

Very soon after that, Charlie did come to Richmond, and, after calling on Belle, went to see Pauline alone. Notwithstanding he had won his general's wreath, he nevertheless had a very unsteady tread as he ascended the steps and timidly rang the bell at Colonel Rhett's house. He is soon admitted, but the interview between Pauline and himself, after their long estrangement, must be sacred.

Suffice it to say that his great love for her prompted him to forgive her all that she could not explain to his satisfaction, and the future was once more full of hopeful promise. Even the military situation, which, before coming to Richmond, had

caused him grave fears and many moments of despondency, grew more hopeful, illumined as it was with his own bright anticipations.

Slowly and surely, though, the links of the chain were being forged which were soon to bind fast the brave Confederacy. The last winter of its life was nearly at an end, when people began to whisper fears that even Richmond, the Gibraltar of the young republic, might, as a military necessity, have to be evacuated.

Very few really believed it, but all noticed how closely the soldiers remained with their commands, and how few furloughs were granted. One by one points were abandoned, and again the departments were overhauled. This time Major Hughes is among the number to leave, and he had called to bid them good-bye at Mrs. Harvey's.

"I have come on a two-fold errand this morning, Miss Belle," he said, in a jocular tone; "one is to bid you good-bye."

"And are you really going, major?" asked Belle, who had begun to regard him as a permanent resident.

"Yes," answered Hughes, with a sigh; "Uncle Bob has issued a special order for me to re-enforce the army of Northern Virginia as soon as possible, and my friend, General Holmes, is anxious that I should assist him in his increased duties—so, I have been promoted to the honorable position of aid on his staff."

"When do you leave?" asked Carrie.

"To-morrow evening, and that brings me to the other, and, I may say, more important, object of my visit this morning."

Both girls looked inquiringly as he went on:

"It is rather a delicate subject," he continued, a little uneasily, "but—"

"Gracious!" thought Carrie, "can he be going to court us both at once?"

"But you will understand, and, I hope, excuse—" and he paused again.

"Certainly, major, certainly! just as soon as you make it possible for us to do so; pray, go on," said Belle, "I am becoming quite curious"

"Let me explain first, though, that there are many reasons which it will be impossible to explain for the step I am contemplating."

"Do, pray, tell us," said Carrie, "without any more explanation."

"Well, in short, ladies, I am about to perpetrate matrimony," he went on, hurriedly now, "and I call to make, what may seem, an unusual request," now in earnest, at last.

"To be married! Really, major? How interesting!" exclaimed Belle, scarcely believing him to be in earnest, while Carrie and herself waited anxiously for further developments.

Presently he continued, though somewhat embarrassed:

"You don't know the time that Miss Julia and I have had, or, may be you do," he said, as Belle smiled knowingly. "But she has fooled me so often that when I told her I was going away to the army, I asked her to marry me before I went; she said she would, and I am going to hold her to her promise to-morrow morning, at St. Paul's. So, at ten o'clock, the knot will be tied, and both of us want you all to be present."

They promised, accordingly, to be on hand at the appointed hour and witness the ceremony.

At any other time they would have been surprised at what Major Hughes had told them, but the times were prolific in startling events of all kinds, and this being of an agreeable nature commended itself; so, at the appointed hour, the party met at St. Paul's, and, in the presence of the hastily-summoned witnesses, the nuptial knot was tied.

Two hours later Major Hughes bade his bride adieu and hurried away to his new field of labor. At last he was subdued; even *he* began to take a serious view of life.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MRS. RHETT'S condition continued critical throughout the winter, and Pauline rarely left her mother's side. We find her this morning seated in her own room, though, her mother having insisted upon her taking some rest from her constant watchfulness. In her lap lies a copy of "Les Miserables," one of the few "new books" that had run the blockade which hemmed in the Confederacy from the outside world. In vain did she try to fix her attention upon the work before her—even the grand description of the battle of Waterloo failed to engross her.

Her truant thoughts were far away, hoping for, and yet dreading, the issue of a nearer Waterloo. How eagerly she longed to prove to Charlie that she meant all that she had said in their last interview, and, as if in answer to her anxious longings, the door presently opened, and Sarah, her maid, entered.

"Miss P'line, honey, who you reckon's down-sta'rs?" she said, hurriedly.

"Who in the world, Sarah?" answered Pauline, with sudden interest.

"You never guess in de worl', an' I's gwine to tell you—it's Mas' Charlie Holmes, an' he's got dem flowers all ober de collar like de gen'als has."

"No, Sarah, you must be mistaken; are you sure it's Colonel Holmes?" said Pauline, rising and dropping her book.

"Jes' as sho as I'm a standin' here, honey; but I never knowed he war a gen'al—jes' says, 'Tell your Miss P'line dat Mr. Holmes is here,' as meek like, fur all he look so peart," answered Sarah.

"But mother, Sarah, what will she do?" asked Pauline, all in a flutter of preparation.

"O, I'll ten' to your maw, chile; you stay down dar as long as you wants to," answered Sarah, and, with her willing assistance, Pauline was soon ready to descend, only pausing a moment in her mother's room to tell her of Charlie's arrival, and excuse her own absence.

Charlie had been hastily summoned to the city to take part in a council of war among the sachems, and was allowed but a brief hour in the society of her whom he loved so well.

"Your coming," said Pauline, "seemed in answer to my earnest desire to see you, and I do so long to atone for all the pain and anxiety I have caused you," she added, as she looked fondly up into his face.

"That you feel such a desire is sufficient atonement, I do assure you, and I feel almost tempted to ask the same boon of you that Hughes did before leaving Miss Julia, but I know it is best for you that I should not," and Charlie's face grew very grave.

"Do you think, then, there is really cause to fear that Richmond may be abandoned?" she asked, in an anxious and excited tone.

"I do, indeed, fear," answered Charlie, "that it may be very soon evacuated, and that fact makes me dread to leave you. I know not when I may see you again," and a deep sigh escaped him.

"O! I can not think that General Lee will leave us to fall into the enemy's hands," said Pauline, "cut off from all so dear to us."

"Don't you know, darling Pauline, that I would never turn my back on the place that held you, unless the sternest necessity demanded it? General Lee has done all that human strength could to hold it as long as he has; and if he gives it up, be assured that there is a reason for it," answered Charlie. "And now," he continued, presently, "I must leave you, God only knows for how long; for I could not ask for a leave of absence

in the present critical state of affairs, to come to see even you, dearest Pauline."

Then clasping her to his heart he imprinted a lingering kiss on her upturned face.

A moment after and he was gone, only the echo of his footsteps in the hall and the sound of the street door as it closed after him. Then she strained her ear to distinguish his firm, manly tread on the pavement outside. Now, alas! she was alone—how terribly alone she little realized.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IT is the morning of the memorable 5th of April. Belle and her mother have gone to the services at St. Paul's church, and never did the sweet voice of the white-haired minister sound more earnest and impressive than when they knelt to receive the sacred emblems at the chancel.

Scarcely had they returned to their seats, before a messenger was observed to go up to President Davis' pew and hand him a slip of paper. All eyes turned on him as he read it and immediately after left the church.

Then followed one after another the different heads of the Departments who were present; when the minister, seeing the excitement among the congregation, asked a blessing and dismissed them.

All along the streets the most intense excitement was apparent Horsemen were dashing in every direction, but no one seemed able to give any cause for the state of alarm. A secret fear had from the first possessed Mrs. Harvey as to the real origin of it, and at last, meeting an acquaintance high in authority, she asked him the occasion of the unusual condition of things.

"Madam," he answered, "I regret to tell you that Richmond is to be evacuated."

"When?" asked Belle, anxiously.

"Just as soon as possible; by night I expect it will be pretty well emptied," he replied, and hurried on.

"O! God help us!" exclaimed Mrs. Harvey, while Belle found it impossible to restrain her tears.

During the entire day the confusion continued. Every means of transportation that could be found was employed to carry away public property and Government officials. Few of the citizens, comparatively, attempted to leave, for where, alas! could

they find an asylum? The work of packing and leaving went on till late into the night.

Hasty leaves were taken of dear ones. Heart throbs were stilled, to better aid those who must go, and by midnight Richmond lay a doomed and desolate town. No sleep was to be thought of that night, and Belle went with Carrie to the highest point of observation about their house and looked abroad upon the deserted streets.

Far away through the darkness could be distinguished the receding lights of the long and closely-packed train of cars, which carried members of the Confederate Congress and Cabinet. The darkness was ominous, for before very long in the direction of the river they saw a bright light spring suddenly into existence, which rapidly grew into a lurid tongue of flame, and, rising higher and higher, it seemed to devour all before it.

Again and again in other localities the same scene is enacted, until grave fears suggest that the city is to be reduced to ashes. Her father had told Belle that the Government would be compelled to burn certain tobacco and cotton stored there, which it was found impossible to remove, but this knowledge did not prepare them for the terrible conflagration that was soon to threaten the entire city. And not a single cry of fire was heard, not a bell was sounded. The apathy was fearful until the welcome morning dawned at last, when again the streets throng with people. The dens and slums of the city seemed emptied, while the fire spread with alarming rapidity.

Thieves and plunderers quarreled openly over the spoils with shameless audacity; and while this pandemonium raged, poor Pauline, pale and trembling with fear and excitement, made her appearance at Mrs. Harvey's, accompanied by her faithful maid, Sarah.

"Dear Mrs. Harvey," she exclaimed, "what shall I do? Our house has several times caught fire from the cinders that are flying through the air, and what will become of my poor mother

if it should, indeed, get beyond our control? She is almost exhausted now with anxiety and excitement."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Harvey, almost glad to have her energies thus roused into action, for the suspense was truly frightful, "do you remain here with Carrie, Pauline, and Belle and I will return at once with Sarah and bring your mother here. The danger incurred in bringing her can not be greater than that to which she is already exposed."

"Dear, dear Mrs. Harvey, how kind you are to think of it, and I am sure it will be best for her," answered Pauline, in a relieved tone.

Making their preparations hastily, the three soon departed on their errand; and finding Mrs. Rhett seated in a large chair, Mrs. Harvey made her remain as she was, and securing her as well as possible against the risk of catching cold, with the assistance of another servant, they picked up the chair and started off, carrying her thus along through the crowded streets and flying cinders with no little difficulty.

They found their journey a tedious one, too; for besides their inconvenient load, they were constantly intercepted by the mad crowd of thieves and negroes who thronged the streets. Now a wheelbarrow, with immense bolts of Government cloth, is pushed rudely past, with a train of the cloth yards long dragging after; now a negro girl, with her arms piled high with handsome dresses, scuds by. Here they must yield the sidewalk entirely to two dark-looking white men who carry between them an immense Saratoga trunk which they have stolen from a hotel in flames near by. Then follows the first one who claims a share of their sympathy — a poor, old, hungry-looking woman, almost bent double with the weight of a sack of corn which she carries on her head; and just after she passes, an idle dog, too lazy even to plunder, thrusts a knife into the sack, and soon the poor creature is scrambling among the crowd to recover her lost treasure, all unconscious of the fiendish act that deprived her of it, while

he regards the success of his villainy with malicious pleasure. And thus the mad masquerade goes on.

"'Fore de Lawd, ole miss', I b'lieves de jedgment day dun let loose," said Sarah, scared almost out of her senses; "we had better a lef' you at de yether house. I doesn't b'lieves we'll git to Mis' Harvey's to-day."

"We will have to take our time, Sarah," said Mrs. Harvey, trying to appear calmer than she felt.

"Heavens! what can it be?" exclaimed Belle, as just then the air resounded with yells and shrieks, mingled with the clatter of horses' feet over the paving stones. Just before them, the crowd seemed pushed back, and presently an opening showed a troop of horsemen, in the blue uniform which they remembered but too well.

They soon dashed past in the direction of the capitol, several of the party holding aloft United States flags, a large prize having been offered to the man who planted the first one on the building.

Soon, from where they stood, waiting for the way to open, they saw the Southern Cross, in its glistening field of white, torn rudely from its standard and dashed to the ground, with the proud dream of freedom that had reared it. They then turned their heads resolutely away, that they might not see in its place the stars and stripes, which soon floated triumphantly over their fallen fortunes. Taking up their burden again, they soon reached Mrs. Harvey's rooms, the invalid scarcely more exhausted than those who had borne her thither.

A new terror presently seized them, in which the flames, though still raging, were almost forgotten. Shell after shell burst upon their ears in rapid succession.

"Can it be possible that they are shelling us, too, after taking possession?" said Belle.

"God only knows what it can mean," answered her mother.

Just then a wild burst of martial music seemed to mock their

agony, and cheer after cheer rent the air. They soon discovered that the main body of the army had entered the city, and a regiment of sleek-looking negroes, in full United States uniform, broke ranks and stacked their bright, new muskets on the street, in front of their house. The shelling, which had so alarmed them, still continued at intervals, and Mrs. Harvey's anxiety to know the cause emboldened her at last to seek the information from a white man who wore the straps of a major, and seemed in command of the regiment then in front of her house.

So, opening her blind a little way, she called,

"Will you be kind enough to come to the window?"

He answered, by coming at once.

"Can you tell me the cause of the continued shelling?" she asked. "Is there a battle going on near the city?"

"Lord, no, madam; it is the *Labbarattory* explodin', what the rebs set on fire before they left," he answered.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Harvey, quite relieved, and amused, in spite of herself, at his explanation as well as pronunciation.

The point now seemed to be reached when matters could get no worse, and, according to the time-honored maxim, they must, perforce, begin to mend. So thought and hoped they all; but when, a few days later, the news of General Lee's surrender was brought, and no tidings could be learned of absent dear ones, the suspense was, once more, unendurable.

All too true, the mournful tidings proved, as soon, one after another of the disbanded army made their way back to the homes they had fought so bravely to defend; but no news came from either Randolph or Charlie, and Belle and Pauline made their way one morning to the house of a friend, where they fondly hoped to hear something of their absent lovers.

An unusual crowd was congregated on the sidewalks, as they went along, the men in blue predominating largely, though now and then a citizen's and a faded suit of welcome grey would meet their eye.

Presently, down the street before them, they heard loud and repeated cheering, and saw that a body of cavalry was approaching. Stepping hurriedly into a doorway, they waited, hoping the excitement would subside, but it increased as the riders drew nearer, and looking in the direction of the advancing party, they recognized their own beloved General Lee, at the head of a small band of faithful Confederates, who are performing their last official duty to their honored chief, in escorting him to his home.

He was grander in his downfall and prouder in his humility than the enemy who now triumphed, for he bore within him the consciousness of duty well performed, regardless of consequences. As if in acknowledgment of these attributes, the air continues to resound with the cheering of the multitude, in which both friend and foe unite, as he rides along with uncovered head, and again takes his place in the ranks of private life.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AFTER parting with Pauline, Charlie again rejoined his command, which was soon after ordered to the neighborhood of Petersburg, and in the retreat from that place, at the close of a hard day's fighting, he received wounds which compelled him to submit to being carried from the field. He was borne to an ambulance in waiting, where his wounds were dressed, and he was made as comfortable as the hurry and confusion, incident to the rapidly-retreating army, would allow. No word of regret or murmur of pain passed the tightly-compressed lips, but the agony of shattered hopes was plainly stamped upon his noble features.

He knew too well what this hurried retreat meant, and realized that but one result was possible, in view of the numbers attacking from every quarter. He was carried to the nearest hospital and consigned to a ward already nearly filled with wounded and dying. It was impossible, at first, to determine the extent of his injuries, though a ball had entered the right thigh, besides a less dangerous wound in the hand.

While the surgeons held their consultations around him he listened with little interest to their opinions, lulled, as he was, into a dreamy restfulness by a composing draught which had been administered.

"His thoughts were with his heart, and that was far away;" he was a boy again, and with his playmates he roamed the fields in quest of nuts or game, a happy, careless child, little dreaming that the knowledge he then so readily acquired in the use of his rifle would ever be put to such stern purpose in after-life.

Now the scene shifts, and he is walking over the green fields by the side of a mother, long since entered into her rest. They are on their way to the little church, which stood on the suburbs

of his early village home in the shadow of great oaks, which, in his childish fancy, seemed to touch the sky. The quiet beauty of the surrounding country is vividly recalled, and the happy sunshine of his gladsome boyhood once more gilds his surroundings.

Presently they are within the sacred walls, and the organ's deep tone rises in solemn grandeur with the music of the voices. Too young to appreciate the beauty of the Liturgy, with which his mother is soon absorbed, he grows restless, and before long, as she settles herself to listen to the words of the preacher, she gives him her prayer-book, with the one picture it contains, open before him.

How plainly he sees it all again—his blessed Saviour nailed to the cross, and the emblems of His precious love, the bread and wine, at the foot. So distinctly it all rises before him that, in fancy, he hears again the preacher's voice, which then seemed so tiresome: "My son, give me thy heart."

The mother's face now seems bending over him and her arms extended, as if in entreaty; he can almost hear the rustle of angels' wings, as he says to himself:

"What a coward to bring my heart to such a shrine, only when earth and its vain hopes have left me stranded on the shoals of mortality. Could any but a loving and forgiving Saviour receive such an offering?"

He was now aroused from his dreamy state by one of the surgeons addressing him:

"It will be necessary to probe for this ball, general; do you feel as if you could stand the operation this morning?"

"O, yes, anything," answered Charlie, with a languid smile.

"Probably it would be best to wait a day or so till you recover somewhat from the weakness occasioned by the loss of blood," said one of them.

But Charlie was convinced, from their want of decision, that they regarded it as of very little use, either way.

"What news from Richmond, doctor?" he asked, next morning, in a feeble voice, as the surgeon approached him.

"We can hear nothing from there now, general, except through Yankee sources. I suppose you know we are in their lines?"

"Yes, I imagined so," returned Charlie, sadly.

"Are your friends where you can communicate with them?" he continued, "for I might be able to send a message if you will give me their address."

"I can not hope to see them again, doctor. I know I can not live, though you have not told me; I feel that my days are rapidly being numbered," said Charlie, with a degree of composure that astonished his physician. "I hope that I am ready, and, if possible, I would like to see a minister of the Gospel," he added.

"While there is life there is hope, you know, general," said the surgeon, trying to reassure him. "I confess you have an ugly wound, but we will do our best for you."

"What news from the army, doctor?" he presently asked again.

"Bad enough, bad enough. Lee must surrender, sir. It is a great pity that he did not do so before. It seems madness to oppose such an army with his handful of half-starved, half-clad soldiers," he added, impatiently.

Sure enough, next morning the rumor reached them that Lee had indeed surrendered, and soon was confirmed by the arrival of Major Hughes, who had ridden post haste as soon as possible to the bedside of his friend.

"At last the jig is up, old fellow," he said, coming up to Charlie, "and I have had a time trying to find you."

But Charlie's feeble greeting alarmed him, and he continued: "Ain't you getting along all right? I was in hopes you would be able to go back to Richmond with me. A Yankee officer who rode with me a part of the way from Appomattox promised

to get me an ambulance to carry you to Richmond. Cheer up, cheer up, Charlie; let us make the best of a bad bargain."

He soon, however, became convinced that Charlie's wound was more serious than he had at first supposed.

"It is impossible for me to move, Hughes," he presently said, in feeble accents. "I know I can't last long as it is, but there may be time for you to go to Richmond and bring Mrs. Harvey; I know she would come," and he motioned Hughes to lean nearer while he whispered something in his ear.

"That I will," answered his friend, "but you must cheer up, old boy. I thought I was going to die, too, when my arm was taken off, but you see I didn't; and now if you will promise to be hopeful and make up your mind to get well, I will go post haste and bring them back in the least possible time;" and bidding Charlie good-bye he was soon on his way to Richmond, almost forgetting, in his eagerness to serve his friend, his own desire to get back to the capital.

But poor Charlie now sank rapidly, the excitement of his friend's visit having an unfavorable effect, and as he counted the weary hours until he should return he grew more feverish, though suffering less pain.

All day long his gaze was riveted upon the piece of road which skirted the woods opposite his window, and by which he knew Hughes must return. Late in the evening, when the shadows were lengthening and the fitful sunbeams made grotesque and uncanny shapes of every commonplace object, his mournful watch was rewarded by seeing a horseman dash forth from the woods which obscured the road in the distance, and soon he recognized his friend, but alone.

"Where is she?" he exclaimed, with mournful eagerness, a moment after, when Hughes reached his side.

"They are coming; will be here in a moment," he answered, tenderly. "I rode ahead."

A sweet and placid smile now stole over Charlie's face, and

the quick, labored breathing soon after told of the final struggle. The angel of death, which had hovered over him all day, seemed to stay its dissolving hand until he received the assurance that Pauline's love would bring her to him. The ball had penetrated to the spinal column, and mortification having taken place, his death was comparatively painless.

Poor Hughes was completely unstrung. He had never slackened rein, from the time he had left Charlie's bedside, except long enough to get a conveyance for Mrs. Harvey and Pauline, and see them safely on their way. Resisting the impulse to visit his youthful bride, he hurried once more to return to his wounded comrade, haunted by a vague fear that it might indeed be the last sad service which he could render him.

And now, though all was over, he could not turn away, feeling no shame either for the manly weakness that moistened his eyes and made him bend lower and lower over Charlie's still warm face until his lips rested on the placid brow.

The sound of approaching wheels now warned him that Mrs. Harvey and Pauline were very near, and he went to meet them. Their fears that they had arrived too late were confirmed by Hughes' appearance as he approached the carriage, and in silence he supported Pauline's bowed form as they followed Mrs. Harvey into the chamber of death.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHEN it was decided to evacuate Richmond, the utter hopelessness of further resistance must have been apparent to a disinterested observer, but it was not in the nature of things to expect men, who had contended so long and so successfully against such fearful odds, to give up all at once, and, as they fell back, though disputing every inch of the way with unflinching courage, their humane leader became convinced that further sacrifice of the lives of his men would be worse than useless.

With every port successfully blockaded, an incendiary element at their very hearthstones, and no reserve force from which to draw fresh recruits, the outlook was indeed hopeless; and what really had been the result of a drain of four years upon unreplenished resources was attributed to the bad management of those at the helm.

All felt that a crisis had arrived. Reduced to rations, which the Revolutionary fathers would have scorned, the grim alternative between starvation and surrender was placed before the heroic band, who, even in their maimed condition, had kept at bay, not an allied army of two or three nationalities, but one that represented, among its recruits, every nation of Europe.

No superiority of courage or skill had conquered the ignominious peace which seemed imminent, but the natural law of wear and tear had at last triumphed, and the lucky man who rode in at the death received the pæans of an admiring world, which did not reflect that the noble game was already slowly, surely dying. He simply arrived in time to witness the death throes and claim the glory.

The one illusive hope that had buoyed up the fainting Southern heart, for nearly two years, was that of foreign recognition,

by which they hoped to have their ports opened. Nobody had been silly enough to suppose that they could exterminate the hosts of foreigners which were constantly thrown before them by commanders who seemed to value human life as little as any earth-work. Line after line of these human breastworks had been annihilated on too many battlefields, and yet it only required time and money, both of which the enemy had plenty, to bring the same number to the front again.

Flesh and blood were not equal to it, and, yet, in the face of all, some there still were who could not talk calmly of surrender. The word had such an awful meaning, so much had been sacrificed. What good, thought they, can result from giving up now, and thus, with bated breath, they talked in knots around their camp-fires. Among a little band, which are apart from the others, we notice our old friends, Gooch and Randolph.

"Never shall I surrender," says Randolph, "as long as an organized body of men exists on Southern soil."

"Nor I," said Gooch.

"Nor I," say several other voices.

"As soon as it is positively known that Lee means to surrender," continued Randolph, "we will make for the mountains, and, crossing into the south-western part of the State, we will find our way to Kirby Smith, in the Trans-Mississippi department," he added.

The listeners expressed their approbation of his plan, and, after selecting a point of rendezvous and agreeing upon a signal, they dispersed.

In a very short time it became apparent that the dreaded surrender was imminent, and Randolph, who had been promoted some time since to the command of his regiment, repaired to the place of meeting. He was soon joined by Gooch and the rest of the party, except two, who, at the last moment, succumbed to the influence of visions of possible flesh-pots, which the alternative might have in store.

Gooch, who was color-bearer of his regiment, had torn from its staff the tattered and bullet-marked banner, which had so often led them to victory. Tenderly, and, with reverent hands, he had folded it together, and, placing it next his body, he buttoned his faded jacket tightly around it, inwardly resolving that that, at least, should be saved the ignominy of surrender.

They kept their movements very quiet, and just as the first streaks of the cold gray dawn lighted the eastern sky, they rode from their place of rendezvous.

Their apprehensions of an early surrender proved correct, for long before they kindled their camp-fire for the night, the army of Northern Virginia had unflinchingly met its fate, yielding up all, except its undying laurels.

After several days hard riding, Randolph and his party reached a point in the Alleghanies, where they considered it safe to rest, as the entire party were now quite in need of it, as well as their horses. Being one of the few neighborhoods in Virginia that had never been visited by either army, they found the rustic population both able and glad to share their homely fare with them.

This comparatively new country was so entirely removed from the seat of war, and by its peculiar geographical position had been so entirely out of the wake of either army, that it seemed almost a new world to our soldier friends, who had been hurried from place to place for four long years. They concluded to go into camp and remain in this secure retreat for a few days, until they could hear from the armies and gain strength for the trip they contemplated.

They chose for their bivouac a spot near a beautiful lake of clear water, which was nearly at the summit of the mountain, and lay like a polished stone in the midst of a wilderness of rhododendron, which, with its profusion of variegated, waxy flowers and dark green foliage, made a fit setting for this lovely freak of nature. In its clear waters could be seen a perfect reproduction

of the blue sky overhead, as well as the giant pines which grew near, and through which, during the livelong day, the mournful winds sighed a requiem, it seemed, to the fast fading hopes of the Southern Confederacy.

"If Lee could but have withdrawn his armies to this point," said Gooch, as they lounged on the grassy shore of the lake before them, "I believe we could have kept the Yankees at bay forever."

"But the same difficulties would beset us here in even greater proportion," answered Randolph; "where on earth could we find supplies to feed an army?"

Their speculations were here interrupted by the appearance of Sambo, who had insisted upon sharing his master's fortunes.

"'Pon my soul! Mas' John," he exclaimed, "I's feared ole Bill's about swamped, he dun eat so much; he layin' down, an' can't git up."

With that, they all jumped up and ran to old Bill's assistance, Sambo leading the way.

"How did it happen, Sam?" asked his master, as they reached the animal, for sure enough, there was the old veteran, who had never flinched under fire, and who could never be held still with stiffest bit, when in hearing of the cannon's roar, there he was, in almost the last agonies.

"You tol' me to picket him 'roun', sah, tell he got plenty. I thought sholy ole Bill got de sense to know when he done eat enuff; so I lay down nigh him, but 'fore I knowed it, Mas' John, I was 'sleep (ain't gwine to tell no lie 'bout it). I was waked up presently, howsomever, by the dreffullest roar, an' dar he lay, jest like dat."

Every effort was made to restore him, but to no effect, as he did not revive at all, and now and then the dreadful roar would break forth again.

"Po' ole fellow," says Sambo, regarding his dying agonies with affectionate interest, "so long sense he had nice green

grass, and plenty time to eat it, dat I 'specs he dun forgot how much he took, Mas' John."

He soon breathed his last, now, and was buried on the mountain side, with this inscription to mark his lonely tomb:

"Here lies Bill, a Faithful
Confederate."

This unforeseen accident caused a delay in carrying out their plans, which was by no means easy to remedy, and one of his men, somewhat familiar with the neighborhood, was sent out to canvass the possibilities of supplying Bill's place; while Randolph himself, accompanied by Gooch, also set out one morning, though with no well-defined plan as to his movements, except that of "looking around."

They concluded to follow the stream which flowed from the lake, and which, coquettishly, led them on, leaping now over shelving rocks, and again, almost hidden in precipitous mossy banks, till it brought them to a forest of stately white pines, which seemed to shoot straight from the earth, until they touched the blue sky overhead, and through whose closely-interlacing boughs, only now and then, the golden rays of sunshine would gleam, lighting up the mossy dells and luxuriant patches of fern with which the wood abounded. Now and then, a cluster of the trailing arbutus, or wild jessamine, lay in their path, perfuming all the air around with its delicious, spicy odor.

Large white rocks of glistening limestone were piled high on all sides, as if left over from the mighty work of creation by the Master-builder. These were sometimes moss-crowned and fringed with delicate ferns, in regular precision. Now emerging from the woods, their route lay under a huge rock, that looked as if it had been arrested in its fall from the peak, which loomed above it, and held suspended, by some unseen hand, the mosses and ferns clambering over it in wild luxuriance, with here and there sturdy red columbine and wild violet dotting its surface.

Now the stream almost disappeared entirely, but presently burst forth again with greater volume, and led them on, until finally they reached a cascade.

The new and beautiful revelation which was unfolding before them had so excited their admiration, as to almost win them for the time from a contemplation of their own misfortunes.

An exclamation of wonder and surprise burst from them simultaneously as the miniature cataract appeared to their view. In order to see it to the best advantage, they had to retrace their steps for some little distance and enter a deep ravine, which, on one side, seemed to be built up with masonry after the most mathematical precision, while the other sloped away to the tall forests beyond.

The bright sunlight streaming from above them lighted up the foaming waters like a great silver column, whose shimmering surface filled all the air around with particles of its brightness.

"I do not think anything could be more wildly beautiful than the country through which we have passed this morning," exclaimed Randolph, rapturously, as they stood admiring the cataract before them.

"It is, indeed, grand," said Gooch, "and one well calculated to inspire the poet's pen. How unfortunate that neither you nor I have power to arrest the muse and attune it to the beauties of this favored spot," he added.

Here no trace of the destroying hand of war was visible, and these travel-worn veterans were not loth to enjoy the untrained beauties of nature which abounded on every side. After resting for awhile they began to retrace their steps, and, upon reaching their bivouac, found that two of their party had gone with Sambo on a tour of discovery in the opposite direction, and were quite as enthusiastic as themselves over what they had seen.

So next morning, with Sambo as their guide, they set off again.

"I b'l'eves, 'fore de Lawd, Mas' John," says Sam, "dat we's

dun struck de Mount Pisgah or Aryrat, fur you kin jes' see all ober de worl'."

"Sam, Sam," said John, amused, "you talk too fast; you know the world is round; how can you see all over it at once?"

"Mas' John," he returned, "I allus b'l'eved dat tale tell now, but you jes' wait tell you gits dar, en' dey ain't no roun' place 'bout it nowhars, dat's de Gawd's trufe, Mas' John."

The surface of the country had changed entirely by this time. From the tall pines which encompassed the lake some three-fourths of a mile away, they had now come to oaks and chestnuts scarcely higher than the ferns which grew in wild luxuriance all around; and after struggling through the pathless wilds a short distance further, they reached the summit of Bald Knob, the highest point of the Alleghenies in that part of the State. Here, nature had piled an immense rock, as if for the benefit of her inquisitive children, and climbing the rude steps which led up its sides, our tourists could but acknowledge the justice of Sambo's description.

There lay the beautiful Peaks of Otter seemingly at their feet, though they knew them to be nearly a hundred miles away. Stretching far away, on either side, were ranges of mountains which were lost in the hazy, illimitable distance, while nearer to them they distinguished rivers which seemed like silver threads winding their way through the fresh green foliage.

Awe mingled with admiration as they were thus brought face to face with the mighty works of the Creator. Nothing in sight to remind of man's progress or his vain attempt at rivalry, they seemed almost to tread in the very footprints of the Almighty.

Upon returning once more to their bivouac, they found that the messenger that had been despatched to the nearest village for information of Lee's movements had also gotten back; though confirming their worst fears. Randolph assembled the little band and formally acquainted them with the fact.

"Of course my authority over you all ceases from this

moment," he said, "but I intend myself to go to the Trans-Mississippi Department, and will be glad to have you all go, too; but I can fully excuse and understand the motives of any who may prefer to return to their homes. You have led a hard life, 'tis true; but you have done your duty, and that consciousness should sweeten your future, no matter what else it brings. And I am sure," he continued, "that I but voice the sentiments of each one when I say that I would rather stand to-day where I do, conscious of my small share in the glorious heritage which the army of Northern Virginia bequeaths to the South, than in the foremost ranks of those who have wrested our liberties from us."

A murmur of approbation passed around among them, though all of them, with the exception of Gooch, decided that if "Mars' Bob" had really surrendered they would too, one of them, however, agreeing to let Randolph take his horse. Soon now, the little band dispersed, the majority of them with but little aim in life except to get enough to eat and to be let alone.

CHAPTER XL.

CHARLIE'S friends managed, through the kindness of the authorities, to have his body brought to Richmond and interred on a sunny slope in the most picturesque portion of Hollywood, and where the soft murmur of the rippling waters near is heard in low monotone all the day long, while every day the green turf was covered with fresh flowers by her who would so gladly have atoned for the anguish she had caused to one she had learned to love only too well.

One by one the soldiers continued to return, and yet Belle's anxiety to hear from Randolph was not satisfied. Not a line, not a message had she received, and she was almost distracted with suspense. Weeks lengthened into months, and still no tidings came.

"He said that but one thing should prevent his returning," she repeated over and over again, and in vain tried to persuade herself that a thousand things might have occurred which he could not possibly foresee.

The Northern papers, too, told of a portion of the army in the far West that had not yet laid down their arms.

"Might it not be possible," she reasoned, "that Randolph has gone there?"

Colonel and Mrs. Harvey, with Mary and Tom, had been furnished transportation by the authorities to their home in the Valley, and Belle now received a letter from her mother.

"Not a vestige of the dear old homestead is to be seen," she wrote. "Those old walls, made sacred by so many hallowed associations, are leveled to the ground, and the loved roof-tree gone forever.

"We have been obliged to take refuge, for the present, with friends more fortunate than ourselves; but the work of rebuilding the waste places will be a tedious and never-ending task, for where, alas! for years to come, if ever, can we hope to find the means?

"There is plainly nothing to do but accept the situation and make the best of it, assured that God in His infinite wisdom has some wise purpose in thus afflicting us.

"The destruction of property and loss of means, however, is a very small part of our misfortunes. You, dear daughter, must remain in Richmond with Carrie until I write you again.

"Jennie has been to see me. She wears her matronly honors with great dignity, but is almost heart-broken at the result of the struggle. Jacob thinks they may be compelled to leave the neighborhood, as it has leaked out in some way that he furnished Jackson with the information that led to the capture of Harper's Ferry.

"And now I must bid you good-bye. YOUR MOTHER."

A few days after this, Belle was startled by a knock at her door, and upon opening it found her visitor to be no less a personage than Sambo. Her welcome could scarcely have been more cordial had it been Randolph himself, for she knew he brought her good tidings, as he grinned from ear to ear, though two big tears stood in his honest eyes.

"Miss Belle, honey, Mas' John sont you dis," said he, fumbling in the pocket of the grey jacket that he still wore with pride, though he had evidently conformed to the military order of covering the brass buttons, but, even in this, his grotesque humor showed itself, for he had a different colored rag tied on each button.

Belle snatched the letter from him, and, tearing it open, read it eagerly, Sambo watching her with an amused expression as she did so.

"Why, Sam," she exclaimed, presently, "where in the world have you been since your Mas' John gave you this letter? It was written nearly a month ago."

"Lawd, miss, ef you had a knowed all I has been fro, to git here wid dat ar letter, you'd be dat proud. I made sho when I lef' Mas' John dat de wust ob de troubles was ober, but de fust Yankee I met ordered me to git off o' dat hoss, dough Mas' John had tuck de perticklest pains to mount me on him, an' I

tole him so; 'but,' ses he, 'what de debbil do I keer fur your Mas' John, you fool, you! Don't you see dat de animule have got "U. S." scotched on his lef' flank.' Dar it was, sho 'nuff, an' dar he sot, wid his gun p'inted at me, an' so I ses to myse'f, ses I: 'Sambo, you ain't no better nor Mas' Gen'al Lee, an' when he war outnumbahed he surrendered,' so down I drapped to de groun', an' put de bridle in his han,' but I 'treated in good order, wid my face to de enemy, fur he still kep' a p'intin' de gun, tell I got clean out o' sight.

"EN I SOT RIGHT DOWN AN' I KIVERED UP EBBERY LAS' ONE O' DEM BUTTONS."

"I hadn't gone so very much fudder," he continued, "when here cum anudder.

"'Is you been payroled?' ses he. 'Lawd,' ses I, 'mister, does de *cullid* folks has to git payroled, too?'

"'Yes, you rascal,' he ses, 'ebberybody who wars one o' dem cussed grey jackets has to git de payrole.'

So I went wid him to de provo's an' got de payrole, but ses I to myse'f, ses I: 'I'll take off de jacket tell I gits to Richmon', fur fear'd it might fotch me mo' trouble;' so I rolls it up an' carries it 'long tell I gits here, dis mawnin', an' I puts it on agin. 'Fore I had got a half squar', here come a sojer wid a musket.

"'I has orders to 'rest anybody what's w'arin' Confederick buttons, en, ef you don't kiver 'em up, you has to go to jail.'

"'Lawdy, lawdy,' ses I, 'dey's arter de po', palt'y little buttons, now,' so I promised to kiver 'em right off, an' goes to de fust house I come to, an' begs fur dese rags, en I sot right down an' kivered up ebbery las' one o' dem buttons, an' dat is how I come to look so 'onery, miss, an' took so long to fotch de letter."

"You are certainly excusable, Sam," said Belle, who, by this time, was laughing immoderately, as well as Carrie, who had been attracted by the welcome voice of Sambo.

"I can not tell you how much obliged I am for all your trouble, and I only wish I had some money to pay you for it," continued Belle, "but I have nothing but Confederate notes."

"Dat 'll do, miss, dat 'll do; it 'll be good arter awhile, anyways it 'll do," answered Sam.

This letter was now soon followed up by Randolph, in person, though so broken in spirit and health, that Belle scarcely recognized him when he first made his appearance. He had indeed gone to the Trans-Mississippi, but arrived only in time to surrender at last.

Belle and himself were married without further delay, and, with Sambo, they returned to Randolph's home in the southern part of the State, being one of the few spots that the enemy had not laid waste, and where most of the negroes had remained. There the now wedded pair started in life, with at least a shelter. Willing hands though they had, and loving hearts, yet many trials beset their path in the altered customs of the new dispensation.

CHAPTER XLI.

IT is September, 1865, and no longer throughout the land is heard the tread of countless thousands, as they keep time to the beat of the martial drum. The ambitious dream of self-government, which had animated the people of the fair Southern land for the past four years, had been resigned, and a black-winged peace sits enthoned among the ruins that were made to establish her dominion.

Pauline Rhett had returned once more to Charleston with her father and mother, though their beautiful home, which had stood in the shelled district, was a mass of ruin, as well as their summer retreat, further inland.

Thus they were compelled to seek quarters with a friend, who, living in the more northern portion of the city, had escaped the general destruction, and now gave shelter to as many of her friends as her house would accommodate.

The changed mode of living and poor prospect of any improvement soon told on Mrs. Rhett's health, and not many weeks after their return she began to sink rapidly, though her physicians could assign no active cause for her decline. She very soon breathed her last, though her friends, by a rigid self-denial, managed to supply her with all that could contribute to her comfort, to the end.

Poor Pauline was now broken-hearted, indeed, but she had little time to indulge her own grief, for her father, heart-stricken as well as broken in spirit, required all her attention. She feared, indeed, at times, that he would lose his reason, and again that, in a moment of grievous despair, he might even be tempted to take his own life.

She sat thus one morning musing over her father's condition and her own melancholy prospects; how best to improve that

condition, and earn for her father some of the comforts, which, she fondly hoped, might restore him to his former physical strength, now occupied her thoughts. Energies, which, for want of use, had all along lain dormant, now made themselves felt in plans and suggestions that, under more favorable circumstances, might never have been heard from at all.

Unaccustomed to provide for even her own individual comfort, her ambitious projects, as may be imagined, were not very well defined, while her omnipresent grief deprived them of that hopeful buoyancy, so necessary to the accomplishment of any proposed plan.

Affairs were in this state, when one morning a visitor was announced, and her sudden start of surprise, as she read the name of Edward Appleton on the unpretending piece of cardboard that was handed her, proved how entirely the visit, which he had sworn to make her upon his return from abroad, had passed from her memory. Her first impulse was to decline seeing him, urging the deep mourning she wore, as her excuse. But a second thought changed her mind, and she decided to go down.

Though having heard of Pauline's bereavement, Appleton was not prepared for the striking change in her appearance, but her chastened look of resignation only heightened the beauty that had already made such an impression. The dignified greeting of friendly cordiality was not to be mistaken for one of greater warmth, however, and with wonderful delicacy he refrained from any allusion to the termination of the war.

"Will it be untimely or out of place, Miss Pauline," he said, presently, in anxious tones, "for me to ask of you the reasons that operated to make you write that last letter to me?"

"I know you will think me guilty of gross inconsistency, Colonel Appleton," she answered, regretfully, "when I tell you that I had misunderstood my own feelings in the matter."

"Don't tell me that, for God's sake! You can not possibly

mean it, Pauline, after all that passed, too. I could better excuse you, painful as it was, on any other ground, but don't tell me that the love which you allowed me to hope you felt for me had no existence—I will not believe it," he continued, impetuously.

"And surely, now, there can be no obstacle," he began again "The torture that I suffered, lest you might be in need, hastened my return before my mission had expired. Do, dearest Pauline, marry me at once, and let me carry you from this scene of desolation. Will you not?" he continued to plead.

"Colonel Appleton," she said, "do not think me unmindful of your kindness, but I can not even listen to such language from you now. The impossibility of what you ask makes it more than useless—it is painful."

"Can it be possible that, after all these years of waiting, I am to be denied the fulfillment of my fondest dream?" he asked, passionately.

"It must be so," she answered, "and it seems my sad fate to grieve and disappoint all who care for me," she continued, with a sigh, while unshed tears moistened her eyes, and Appleton, mistaking the cause of them, renewed his pleading.

"I would, O, so gladly, remove you, Pauline, from the discomforts which will surround your life here for a long time to come. Say, will you not give me the right to do it?"

"Ah, could you but see my poor father," she answered, "the total wreck he is! you would not ask me to leave him. It almost crazes me to see his proud form so bowed."

With the sudden inspiration of a new idea, Appleton once more spoke, eloquently:

"I would not ask you to leave him, dearest Pauline, but in the home which I would make for you he should ever be an honored guest."

He had touched a dangerous key. Thoughts that had had no previous existence now sprang into Pauline's mind. She saw

before her ease and comfort for her poor father, who now stood so much in need of both, and a loving protector for herself, in whom she knew she could confide for all time. Was it not her duty to yield—would not even Charlie, in his unselfish love, counsel her to do it?

And then the thoughts of his noble self-sacrifice, his passionate devotion overwhelmed her, while Appleton nervously waited for her answer.

"Leave me till to-morrow to think of it," she at last said, in broken accents, and Appleton soon took his departure.

It was late in the night when Pauline sought her pillow, but no sleep visited her eyelids for hours afterward.

"I can not, I can not, wrong the noble spirit that gave up all," she said to herself; "as much as I love my father, and as much as I believe Appleton loves me, I can not prove so faithless to Charlie and the cause for which he died!"

Accordingly, on the following morning she wrote to Appleton, almost afraid to trust herself again to his seductive pleadings.

"My mind is made up," she wrote; "even were I to accede to your wishes, it would not be from the motive which alone should make it desirable in your eyes. Thoughts of my poor father, and his condition, caused me for a moment to waver and seem in doubt. But do not think me unappreciative of your noble generosity when I say, once for all, that no tie nearer than a warm friendship can ever bind us two. I owe it to you to confess that the heart which you would ask at my hands is buried forever beneath the sod in Hollywood; and here I will tell you something else which you never knew before. To the noblest soul that wore the hallowed grey you once owed your own life. But for his generosity you would have been left lifeless on the field of Gaines' Mill. I shall always remember you in my prayers, and desire for you Heaven's richest blessing! Among your own people may you find a heart capable of appreciating your noble nature. And now, I must bid you a last farewell.

"PAULINE."

This letter was handed Appleton before the hour appointed for his visit to Pauline. He read it over and over, not able, at first,

to realize to the full its sad import. Then, shaking his head sadly, he murmured :

"Thus are my dreadful presentiments realized."

A few hours later he had taken passage in an ocean steamer, and, with a heavy heart, he turned his back on the scene of destruction that now marked the spot where once had sat the fairest city by the sea.

THE END.

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